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FOUNDATION WORK BEGINS ON TOWERS 2, 3, AND 4



JOE WOOLHEAD

WTC MOVES FORWARD

At the March 12 luncheon for the New York Buildings Council, a trade group supporting the local construction industry, Larry Silverstein, president and CEO of Silverstein Properties, and Anthony Shorris, executive

director of the Port Authority of NY & NJ, outlined the latest construction schedule for the World Trade Center site. According to their projections, complete site work—including the cores and shells of

continued on page 7

The bathtub for towers 3 and 4 is ready for foundation work to begin. Steel erection on the Freedom Tower should breach street level sometime in May.

FALLING MACHINE CRUSHES TOWN HOUSE, KILLS SEVEN



AARON SEWARD

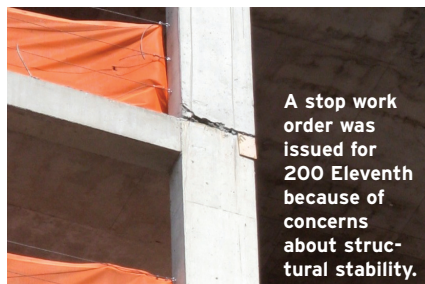
TOWER CRANE TOPPLES

On the afternoon of Saturday, March 15, at a construction site at 305 East 51st Street, a 22-story-high tower crane came loose from its moorings and fell to the south. The crane's latticed steel mast collided with the building across the street and sheared it in half. The cab, jib, **continued on page 6**

STABILITY QUESTIONED AT "SKY GARAGE" TOWER

WEST CHELSEA CRACK-UP

It is the first of its kind in Manhattan or anywhere else: the "en-suite sky garage." The marquee feature of the building going up at 200 11th Avenue will whisk car and driver skyward to one of 14 condos *cum* garage. "It's a crazy idea, but we thought it was a good one," developer Young Woo told Bloomberg **continued on page 3**



A stop work order was issued for 200 Eleventh because of concerns about structural stability.

MATT CHABAN



COURTESY NEW YORK STATE

DIVINING PATERSON'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

NY'S NEXT BUILDER

New York governors often build their legacies. Peter Stuyvesant established New Amsterdam, creating the foundation for modern-day New York. DeWitt Clinton opened the west via the Erie Canal. Al Smith ushered in the skyscraper age with the Empire State Building, and Nelson Rockefeller was master of the superblock.

How New York's 55th governor, David A. Paterson, joins the ranks of these builder-governors remains to be seen, especially given his relatively low profile on issues of development and infrastructure. Paterson's first challenge, after negotiating the budget due April 1 that will determine much of his agenda, will be addressing the ongoing projects of his immediate predecessors. Two of George Pataki's major New York City projects—the World Trade Center and Atlantic Yards—are plagued by delays and political wrangling. Others, particularly those on Manhattan's West Side, were still-born, and this was largely where Eliot **continued on page 3**

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THE POST-SPITZER WEST SIDE

AFTER THE FALL

By the first week in March, Governor Eliot Spitzer had brokered a deal to save Moynihan Station and the \$2 billion faltering public-private bid behind it, which would create a grand replacement for Penn Station and Madison Square Garden. Supporters of the 12-year-old project were optimistic that, with the governor's support, there would finally be real progress. Six days later, revelations about Spitzer's involvement with prostitutes had destroyed his career and left many projects in limbo. David Paterson is now New York's 55th governor, but veterans say that his approach to urban planning remains a mystery. Moynihan Station's future is once again unsure, as is the fate of \$7 billion worth of **continued on page 8**



KAHN HOUSE IN PHILADELPHIA UP FOR AUCTION. SEE PAGE 14

TODD EBERLE

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OF ETHICS AND ARCHITECTURE

In February at a lecture in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Daniel Libeskind said, "I won't work for totalitarian regimes.... I think architects should take a more ethical stance."

He went on to add that although he loved China, its history, and its culture, he was disturbed by how little architects working there know about the public process or even about who previously owned, occupied, or had used the land. "It bothers me when an architect is given carte blanche and told here's a great site, build X," he said to an audience of 1,700, calling for architects to be more principled because they have a significant "role to play at the forefront between practical issues and issues that effect people's lives. It's not enough just to have a good site."

The uproar that ensued mostly in the British press has not spread here, but Libeskind makes a reasonable point given the rapid pace of development in China over the past few years. The English architecture newspaper *Building Design* quoted Nicholas Ray, an architect and lecturer at Cambridge University, who said he respected Libeskind's stance. "It's very good, and because of his profile, it sends a strong message." Jan Kaplicky of Future Systems, praising Libeskind, chimed in, too: "I'm delighted Daniel has said something on this. It's about time, and I agree 100 percent. It's essential you don't work in a country where the regime has a bad record on human rights."

But the paper also reported that a Dutch architect Erick van Egeraat dismissed Libeskind's stance as simplistic and a "publicity stunt." "I could say the same thing about Russia, or France, or anywhere. To try and ideologise architecture is totally wrong; you completely overestimate its power. Architecture can be used to promote an ideology—you need to be aware of that—but it doesn't make the architect or the stone and brick bad."

The downturn in the American economy is surely striking fear into the minds of many architects, and will leave them hunting for more commissions abroad like Steven Holl's massive Linked Hybrid project now well under way in Beijing (AN 02_02.06.08). The need to be pragmatic about bringing in new work may muffle nascent desires for a Libeskind-like protest, yet his point resonates louder than ever, especially given the ongoing question of the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Architects who do mental gymnastics to rationalize commissions from unsavory regimes are one of the oldest stories in the profession, but more recently, architects have been feeling good about the ethical standing of their profession, thanks in part to worthy organizations like Architecture for Humanity, Public Architecture, and Architecture Without Borders. Refusing to work in a country as economically powerful as China takes more of a commitment, since it could cut into potential jobs and profits. But if the prospect of not working to protest a political position requires too much, it is still worth discussing an appropriate response for a profession that wants to have a serious role in building well-functioning cities and societies.

We are not calling for a protest against building in China, or in Azerbaijan, or for any emerging authoritarian dictatorship with an eye on cultural recognition. There would be a certain irony in protesting one country's invasions when our own is fighting in Iraq. But it is time for a broader conversation about what it really means for architects to work in the world with eyes wide open. **WILLIAM MENKING**

NY'S NEXT BUILDER continued from front page
Spitzer had begun to focus his energies.

"These projects have been bungled for the last six or seven years," said Assembly member Richard Brodsky, who chairs the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions that oversees many such projects. "I don't think you can predict how David will handle these things."

Paterson surprised many when he threw his support behind New York City's congestion pricing proposal on March 21, following a closed-door meeting with Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. The governor's move bolstered the prospects of the all but moribund pricing plan, whose passage still requires the blessing of state and city officials. MTA director Elliot Sander told *AN* that passing congestion pricing was the authority's first priority, which would then pave the way for the capital projects.

During his 22 years in public office, Paterson has had a hand in a number of projects, primarily in his home district of Harlem, and these shed some light on how he may approach the public realm.

In the early 1990s, while still an obscure state senator best known for his famous father Basil, also a former state senator, Paterson took a stand against two major projects, which showed his concern for the city's deep African-American roots. The first involved Columbia University's plans to replace the Audubon Ballroom where Malcolm X was assassinated with a biomedical facility; the school eventually won out, but only after agreeing to preserve almost half of the ballroom. The second concerned a new federal building on the site of a colonial-era burial ground for thousands of African Americans, both free and enslaved.

The federal government wanted to rush the excavation of the bones, saying it would cost millions of dollars to perform an extensive dig. Paterson held his ground, and not only were more than 400 bodies recovered, they were reinterred at an on-site memorial that opened last year. Rodney Leon, who designed the memorial, said without Paterson's efforts, many New Yorkers would be blind to that historical moment.

"He felt it was extremely important for this site to be preserved," Leon said. "He was willing to put his political capital on the line. It speaks to his commitment to this community and to New York City as a whole."

The governor has not always been the staunchest preservationist. During the Audubon fight, Paterson founded a group called Landmarks Harlem, but the man he installed in 1995 to grow the group, Paul Brock, eventually bilked it of much of its funds, leading to its collapse. He also pushed for the creation of a school in a former nightclub and a minimum security prison for women in a row of brownstones, both of which preservationists opposed.

As lieutenant governor, Paterson was put in charge of a \$1 billion upstate economic development package and a \$1 billion stem cell research program, which he had championed in the legislature.

Congressman Gregory Meeks, who represents the Sixth District in Queens and has been friends with Paterson for decades, said he believed rebuilding the state's flagging infrastructure would be a major priority. "Look at his district," Meeks said. "You can see from the transformation of Central Harlem that he knows how to drive development. Now the entire state is his district." **MC**

CORRECTIONS

In an article about the redesign of the Chelsea Theater for the School of Visual Arts (AN_05 03.19.2008), the name of the architect was incorrect. The architect is Laurence G. Jones.

In a review in the same issue ("Raise the I-Beams"), a caption and credit misspelled the name of the architect of Ministructure No. 16 in China. The architect is Michael Maltzan.

A letter (AN_03 02.20.2008) was incorrectly edited to suggest that Costas Kondylis was the architect of Madison Green on East 22nd Street. The design architect was David Kenneth Specter.

We regret the errors.

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WEST CHELSEA CRACK-UP continued from front page
News last year.

On March 7, the sky garage got a lot crazier when the Department of Buildings (DOB) issued a stop work order to the 20-story, Annabelle Selldorf-designed project.

Two days earlier, a handful of union members who were picketing the non-union job noticed that some of the concrete structural columns appeared misaligned, and that other sections looked cracked. One called the DOB to complain, and following an inspection, the site was shut down.

Despite the warped columns and other concrete irregularities, the building may be structurally sound. "It's clear that the building is not in danger of falling over," DOB spokesperson Kate Lindquist told *AN*. "What's not clear is whether the current problems need to be corrected further to address any structural issues."

Presented with pictures of the project's imperfections, a handful of engineers said it is very possible that the concrete could be structurally stable without testing it first. Tests are now underway, though it is the

project's engineers, Goldstein Associates, and not the department that is performing them. According to Lindquist, "The owner's engineer has the resources, calculations, and data to make a technical assessment."

Aside from the structural concerns, difficulties could arise for the building's facade if the cladding system is not designed to handle the extra tolerances created by the out-of-plumb columns. This could lead to installation problems and possible leakage.

An engineer for Gilsanz Murray Steficek, which is serving as cladding consultant on the project, said the building seemed in order. "I've been there," the engineer told *AN*. "It looks fine. I'm sure Goldstein has everything under control." Calls for comment to Selldorf Architects and Seven Star Construction and Design, the general contractor, were not returned.

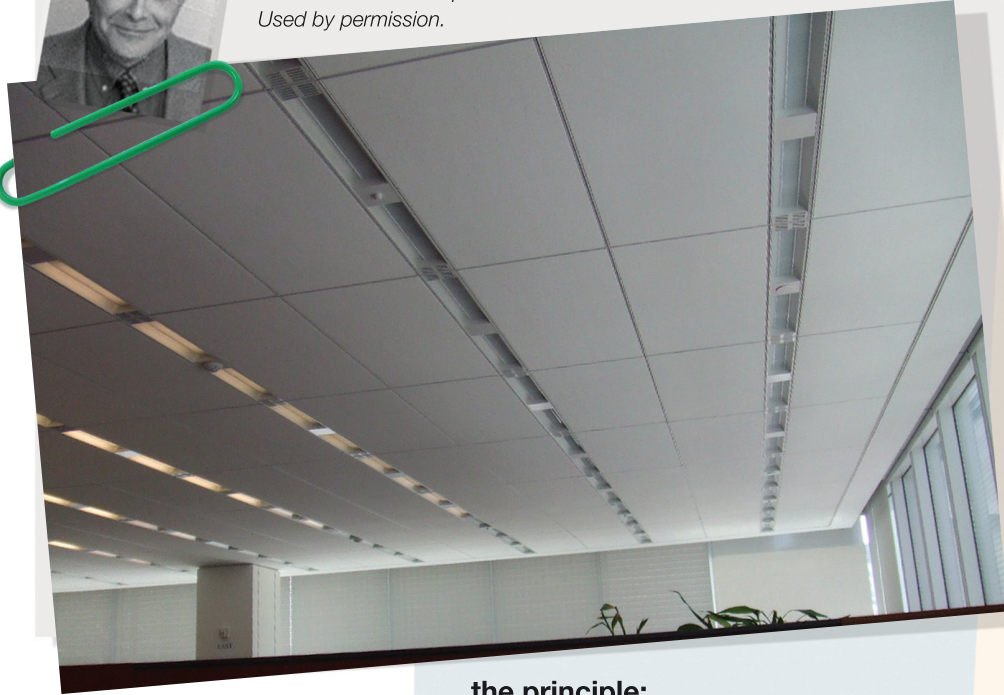
Though Lindquist expects the project to resume once the engineer's report is complete, she said that the incident "certainly raises questions about the work on site."

MATT CHABAN

“I went out to see the NY Times building and was very impressed with how well it is working. Below is a picture I took of the commissioned 8th floor, and you can see how much energy is being saved right in the picture...”

Francis Rubinstein
Staff Scientist
Building Technologies Department
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EAVESDROP: ANNE GUINEY

THE STIMULATING JEAN NOUVEL

Ah, springtime, when young men's fancy turns to love, and middle-aged men's fancy apparently turns to things a little fleshier. At a recent launch party for L'Homme, a new men's fragrance from **Yves Saint Laurent**, the main attraction was the presence of **Jean Nouvel**, who had designed the fragrance's bottle. Like so much of what the bald and black-clad architect creates, it caused gasps. A thick test-tube-like glass shaft rises from an octagonal platform base. But heck, biomimicry is all the rage these days, right? The brief was presumably to come up with something virile, and Nouvel obviously took his directive literally. And just in case you missed the joke, there is a squirmy little bauble floating around inside. Mr. Nouvel described it thusly to the good people of *Wallpaper**: "I wanted to give it a clear-cut shape, so it would easily fit a man's hand while still stimulating different aspects of his imagination." We prefer to rouse our imagination by gazing at the picture of L'Homme's spokesmodel **Olivier Martinez**.

A TELEPORTER IN EVERY POT

We are feeling civically inclined this afternoon, and tough times require bold thinking and new ideas. We would therefore like to make a suggestion to Governor **David Paterson** for a successor to **Patrick Foye** of the Empire State Development Corporation: the writer **Andrei Codrescu**. We were flipping through *Architect* magazine the other day and saw an article on the parlous state of America's infrastructure, and what a handful of experts and thinkers recommend to fix it. Most suggested sound and reasonably predictable measures—planner and teacher **Alex Garvin** thought money should be allocated to a trust fund for community planning, design, and engineering, while a fellow from the League of American Bicyclists advocated a comprehensive network of bike lanes—but nothing so vanilla for Codrescu. Once we have introduced hydrogen-fueled mag-lev trains and free access to bikes, commuter vans, and canoes, he wrote, "we should mobilize a huge national will to make teleportation available to everyone." To finance it? "Within every municipality there should be a tax-exempt 24-hour zone where everything is legal: drugs, sex, and music." This last suggestion, we dare say, might just get traction among some local pols.

SEND TIPS AND TELEPORTERS TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM

AMID HECKLERS AND PROTESTS,
CPC VOTES TO REINFORCE 125TH ST
CORRIDOR

HARLEM REZONING PASSES

On March 10, at one of the most boisterous meetings of the City Planning Commission in recent memory, the commission approved a rezoning proposal for 125th Street that was met with catcalls and jeers from angry Harlemites in the audience. The protesters vowed to fight by any means necessary a plan now headed to a favorable City Council that seems poised to reshape Harlem's Main Street for generations to come.

While the real estate market may finally be cooling off in the city, many neighborhoods remain tense about the encroachments of gentrification, perhaps none more so than Harlem. In recent years, as million-dollar condos began to rise north of 110th Street, the unemployment rate for African American males has remained around 50 percent, a favorite statistic of local activists wary of the city's intentions. These critics believe that the city has not done enough with the latest in a long line of rezonings that the Bloomberg administration has used to reshape the city.

"This is a smoke-and-mirrors situation," said Craig Schley, the executive director of VOTE People, a group founded to oppose the rezoning. "In our opinion, it is the city's attempt to write one more line on Harlem's eviction notice." Schley said that he had little faith in local elected officials, the majority of whom support the rezoning, to

help defeat it, though this does not mean his group will not continue to pressure them.

"Everything is on the table, and we mean that—everything is on the table," Schley said. "Now the fight begins because it is on the shoulders of people who are responsible to the community." Should the issue reach the courts, VOTE People has contracted renowned civil rights attorney Norman Siegel to argue the group's case.

The commission, which approved the rezoning by a vote of 11-2, maintained, as it had at a handful of hearings before the community, that the department's proposal by and large benefited Harlem. "Today is a major milestone in moving this extremely significant initiative forward towards final adoption," commission chair Amanda Burden said in her opening remarks. "This rezoning will reinforce the 125th Street Corridor as an important regional business district and bolster its historic role as an arts, entertainment, and retail corridor."

Though the plan remains largely unchanged, the city did make some modifications to the proposal, largely in line with Community Board 10's concerns. These include moving residential entrances off 125th Street and onto 124th or 126th streets where possible; extending the arts bonus, which provides density bonuses to developers who dedicate five percent of their projects to arts uses, to include rehearsal and below-ground space; and strengthening enforcement mechanisms to ensure long-term use by "bona-fide not-for-profit organizations."

On the occasion of the two "no" votes, the audience exploded in cheers in the commission chambers packed with activists, reporters, and a half-dozen TV cameras. But when three of the black commissioners cast their votes in the affirmative, some turned to vicious heckling, crying out "Uncle Tom traitor!" or "Aunt Jemima traitor!"

MC

OPEN > RECREATION CENTER



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Designers: OMNI Architects

BERNARD JAMES/COURTESY DDC

Originally opened in 1895, the Park Slope Armory is back in use again: Its vast sunlit spaces, expansive drill floor, and balcony seating provide an ideal configuration for a multi-purpose athletic center. The primary goal was to maintain the integrity of the landmark building; the deteriorating steel trusses were scraped and repainted terracotta red, matching the color of the old brick, stair banisters, and new Olympic-quality, 200-meter track. The original iron railings remain on the balcony and, although unusual in a modern athletic center, make the building's history seem present. "The idea was to rehabilitate the original structure. The balconies are almost identical, the stairs are still there, and the floor has been maintained and adapted for a different use," said Michael Vujosevic, the principal in charge of the project. The soaring, barrel-vaulted ceiling is 80 feet at its peak, and the original transom and large windows flood the space with natural light. Managed by the Department of Design and Construction, and designed by OMNI Architects for the Department of Homeless Services, the 65,000-square-foot space will be used for running track instead of running drills, thanks to adaptive reuse. **AUDREY JAYNES**



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NEW ORLEANS RELEASES RFQ FOR WATERFRONT REVAMP

BRINGING
BACK THE BAYOU

COURTESY NOBC

While Brad Pitt and his star-architect entourage attract the cameras, other New Orleanians are trying to get some work done. To that end, the New Orleans Building Corporation (NOBC) on March 5 released a request for qualifications for Phase One of a sweeping plan to reunite the city with the Mississippi River for the first time in more than a century.

With a budget of \$157 million, the project calls for landscape and urban design on 70 acres, knitting together networked green spaces in place of blockaded access, spotty amenities, and battered wharves. "The idea is to spread the wings of the riverfront from the very small core that exists now to the full, five-mile stretch," said NOBC chief executive officer Sean Cummings.

The winning team will dig into New Orleans' *Reinventing the Crescent* plan, finalized last month. That document is the product of a team led by urban designers Chan Krieger Sieniewicz; landscape architect Hargreaves Associates; TEN Arquitectos; and local design firm Eskew + Dumez + Ripple.

Stretching from Jackson Avenue to the Holy Cross neighborhood, the design aims to undo damage from prior development. New Orleans' waterfront has also been barricaded by levees, railways, floodwalls, and parking lots, while cruise-ship berths make yet more obstacles to public access.

"Our strategy was to try and alleviate these conflicts wherever possible," said Mark Dwyer,

associate at TEN Arquitectos. Elevated pedestrian connections, strategic flood wall penetrations, and visual connections also knit into the larger plan, he added.

Major work involves pedestrian bridges and revamped areas like the so-called Moonwalk, adjacent to the French Quarter, where riprap banks will be replaced with landscaped steps and shade structures. This phase also calls for a new amphitheater and sanctuary; stabilizing the fire-ravaged Mandeville Wharf; and wind turbines to power portions of the riverfront. Landscape elements include a terraced levee system and floodwall modifications.

Four finalists will be interviewed for the contract, which is worth up to \$10 million. Submissions are due April 7. The full three phases, worth \$294 million, are expected to spur \$3.6 billion in private investment—with work tidied up in time for New Orleans' 300th anniversary in 2018.

Visions of sleek towers looming over low-scale zones have not necessarily wowed the neighbors, thrilled as they may be with the new waterfront. "I'm concerned about having buildings that are out of scale and out of proportion," said Julie Jones, president of the Bywater Neighborhood Association. "We've got 19th-century houses that are in a bad state. A lot of us think dealing with blight would do more for the neighborhood than sticking an amphitheater on the edge of it."

JEFF BYLES

TOWER CRANE TOPPLES continued from front page and rest of the mast continued to fall, damaging two other buildings on the way down and completely demolishing a townhouse on 50th Street. As of press time, rescue workers had recovered the bodies of seven people killed in the collapse, including six construction workers and a tourist from Florida. The collapse is the latest and most serious in a recent string of accidents on high-rise building sites around the city, and has led many to question the enforcement of safety and inspection standards.

According to reports, the crane toppled after workers jumped, or raised, the crane and were installing a structural steel collar to attach the mast to the concrete structure. During the installation procedure, the collar fell, smashing into another collar that attached the mast to the 9th floor and disconnecting it. Both collars then fell to the base of the tower and the destabilized crane tipped over.

While the findings of the official investigation into the disaster had yet to be released as of press time, attention seemed to be focused on a frayed nylon sling that was still

attached to the fallen collar. An industry insider who requested anonymity told *AN* that the use of nylon slings for this kind of work is poor rigging practice, because steel has sharp edges and can easily cut nylon. In fact, Section 31 of the Ironworkers' Collective Bargaining Agreement entitled "Safety Provisions" contains a clause that clearly states that wire rope slings will be used instead of nylon straps. But these workers were not ironworkers, nor was there a master rigger on site supervising the jump, said the source; they were crane operators from Operating Engineers Local 14. The Department of Buildings (DOB) allows anyone who obtains a tower crane rigger's license to supervise and execute a crane jump and does not require the presence of a professional engineer or a master rigger (a master rigger must be the officer of a company and be able to acquire \$10 million in insurance). As a result, said the source, "You get these roving bands of operating engineers getting their buddies together during the weekend and jumping cranes. They don't have anywhere near the **continued on page 7**

WTC MOVES FORWARD

continued from front page towers 1 through 4, the Calatrava-designed transit center, and the memorial—will be ready for tenant build-out by 2012.

After nearly seven years of contested designs, political wrangling, and financial uncertainties, the four-year schedule announced today sounded overly optimistic to many, especially considering the recent downturn in the economy and the continuing inflation of construction prices. But Silverstein assured the room of construction and real estate executives that the timeline is feasible and that funding for the project is in place. As evidence, he pointed to last year's settlement with his insurers, which resulted in a total payout of \$4.2 billion, and to the \$2.6 billion in Liberty Bonds that have been assigned to reconstruction efforts. All told, said Silverstein, public and private expenditures on the site will total \$20 billion in the next four years.

Shorris spoke more directly to concerns over the rise in construction prices. "We were relatively lucky with our market timing at the Freedom Tower," he said, "but inflation is a constant source of pressure. Adjustments have been made in the design, but

they haven't affected the major elements. We just hope that our rate of getting smarter will exceed the rate of inflation."

According to Silverstein, at the time of his update workers were test-blasting at the sites of towers 2, 3, and 4, and erecting two cranes for foundation work. By the end of the month, foundation work for each of those towers should be well underway. Within a year, the buildings should reach street level. The Richard Rogers-designed tower 3 and Fumihiko Maki-designed tower 4 are expected to top out in mid 2010, and the Lord Norman Foster-designed tower 2—the tallest of these three at 1,278 feet—is expected to follow in 2011. Steel erection has already reached 70 feet up on the Freedom Tower (tower 1), and should reach street level in two months. Tishman

Construction, who is building the Freedom Tower, is completing the work at towers 3 and 4, and Turner Construction holds the contract on tower 2.

The luncheon took place just hours after Governor Eliot Spitzer resigned his post as a result of implication in a prostitution ring. When asked what he would say to incoming Governor David Paterson, Silverstein responded, "All agreements have been signed, all decisions have been made. Now it's time to get on with it."

While work ramped up on towers 1 through 4, plans for tower 5 fizzled. On March 19, JP Morgan Chase announced that it would not build a headquarters on the current site of the derelict Deutsche Bank Building, but instead would move into Bear Stearns' building on Park Avenue.

AS

JOE WOOLHEAD

continued from page 6 expertise at rigging that ironworkers do. You have to ask yourself, why are they using nylon slings? It's the first no-no. They shouldn't even be in the toolbox." Ironworkers execute all crane jumps on structural steel building projects, but they are rarely used for concrete projects because they are one of the most expensive trades to hire.

According to the source, another factor that may have attributed to the fall was the crane's floating foundation. Tower cranes are designed to be freestanding up to, and sometimes above, 200 feet, but they have to have solid concrete foundations in order to absorb lateral loads, which this crane did not have. Most developers are loath to spend a quarter of a million dollars on a temporary foundation for a crane, and so engineers have to rely on tiebacks to the building, which leaves no redundancy if the tiebacks fail.

The real trouble with the situation is that while the workers involved in the accident were doing things by the book, the book itself has two loopholes that may have led to the catastrophe: The city allows people who are not professional riggers to execute crane jumps, and does not require stand-alone foundations for tower cranes.

The city will most likely tighten regulations on crane jumps as a result of this accident, first by requiring that a master rigger and professional engineer be on site during jumps, and second, by requiring more robust foundations. The regulations were tightened

last year after sections of a tower crane fell on a taxi on 3rd Avenue during a jump, that time by requiring that a licensed tower crane rigger be on site during the process. Previously, tower crane riggers only had to be on site when a crane was put up or taken down.

In spite of these regulatory shortcomings, New York City's crane laws are the most stringent in the nation, even more restrictive than those required by federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations. "If you compare the number of cranes in the city with the number of injuries, it's a pretty low percentage," said the source. "You look in the newspaper in Florida and every day you see cranes tipping over. We don't have that. But because of our environment, when something goes wrong it goes catastrophically wrong and takes out a building."

The DOB's investigation is looking into the companies involved with the construction site, including Joy Contracting, a New Jersey-based concrete company that held the crane contract and employed the operating engineers involved. The DOB is also investigating Kennelly Development Company of Manhattan, the developer of the residential condominium, and the general contractor, Reliance Construction Group (RCG). Both Kennelly and RCG expressed their sympathy to the victims and said that they are cooperating with government agencies in the investigation.

AARON SEWARD

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 2, 2008

FOUNDATION FRENZY AS BUILDERS RACE AGAINST REZONE VOTE

LAST CALL ON GRAND STREET



AARON SEWARD

Backhoes have been busy along a 13-block swath of Brooklyn this month as the clock runs out on New York City Council deliberations over contextual height limits for new construction near Grand Street. A similar frenzy swept the area during a 2005 rezoning. Among the projects that beat the height restrictions that time was the 50 Bayard Street condominium, designed by Karl Fischer Architect, whose advertising boasted: "It's now illegal to get this high."

Now another Karl Fischer-designed project is hitting the dirt before Williamsburg's next

contextual-height zone falls into place: a 15-story tower slated to rise on the corner of Grand Street and Driggs Avenue, developed by SK Development Group. In order to expedite the process, construction workers have been demolishing the previous structure, once a bookstore, while simultaneously pouring concrete for the tower's foundation, a tactic that has raised eyebrows among local sidewalk superintendents. "If you were a developer, wouldn't you follow that strategy?" Fischer asked about the quick concrete work. He added that builders stand to lose a bun-

dle of money from the proposed rezoning—or "downzoning," as he calls it—which he claims won't benefit the area in the long run.

That sentiment is not shared by Brooklyn Community Board 1, the Borough President's office, and the Department of City Planning, all of whom approved the new zoning, which emerged in the wake of the 2005 rezoning of the Williamsburg-Greenpoint waterfront. That move made way for the new crop of high-rise residential towers along the East River while imposing contextual height restrictions for many of the neighborhood's highland areas. At the time, developers of projects that exceeded the proposed contextual building heights hurried to pour their foundations ahead of the rezoning, which allows in-progress projects to exceed the proposed zoning envelope.

The rezone, which the council will decide by April 18, includes a two-block radius along Grand Street between the BQE and Berry Street, and two triangular blocks on Metropolitan Avenue. This area's existing R6 zoning has no height restrictions, permitting tower construction on large lots. The proposed R6B zoning would limit building heights to between 30 and 40 feet, with a maximum height of 50 feet, reflecting the area's three- to four-story structures.

For his part, Fischer remains hopeful that foundation work will be completed on the new tower before the council's verdict comes in. "The City Council doesn't want to show favor by rushing [the rezoning proposal] through," he said, alluding to perceived council bias toward neighborhood activists, who have bitterly opposed developers' under-the-wire handiwork. **COLIN DODDS**

AFTER THE FALL continued from front page new offices, apartments, parks, and infrastructure to its west, all projects that require state investment and support.

Along with Moynihan Station, these include expansion of the Javits Center, rezoning of the Garment District, extension of subway service west on the 7 line, and development of a mixed-use district with a park atop the MTA's riverfront Hudson Yards train-service facility. The state owns Hudson Yards, manages the 7 line, and controls the Penn Station site that sets the Garment District's tone. Yet Spitzer's exit, oddly, gives these projects leverage over others.

A joint venture of the Related Companies and Vornado Realty Trust, known as "the two Steves" after CEOs Stephen Ross and Steven Roth, controls the private dollars in creating Moynihan Station. The venture has stalled in negotiations with Madison Square Garden, which would move into the western end of the current Farley Post Office Building under the current plan. Since Ross and Roth (in a separate joint venture with the Durst Organization) have both bid to develop Hudson Yards, that site's fate will brighten if Moynihan's clarifies. It does not need Moynihan Station to survive.

The Hudson Yards project has zoning in place, \$2 billion in bonds for infrastructure, four bidders with enough capital to wait out the uncertainty, and a solid manager in MTA chairman Elliot Sander. Urbitran CEO Michael Horodniceanu, a short-listed for city Transportation Commissioner, and NYU transportation



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professor Allison De Cerreño both told *AN* that Sander—despite his close ties to Spitzer—had earned respect from his board and public officials in crafting a new five-year capital plan and mending relations with the MTA's unions. Hudson Yards, whose sale will fund the MTA's last capital plan, seems assured of continuity.

"I think it's got an energy of its own," said Steven Spinola, head of the Real Estate Board of New York and advisor to the Hudson Yards bidding process. Since the MTA revised its guidelines to require an "equity-type interest" in the land, Brookfield Properties withdrew its bid and focused on its own nearby platform project, a five-acre pair of skyscrapers it calls Manhattan West. That project, with private financing for predevelopment in place, will likely follow its own course. A nearby hotel from Extell Development Company, a long-shot Hudson Yards bidder, similarly has financing in place. The private financing of big projects near Hudson Yards makes that site's development prospects solid, even if Moynihan Station founders.

City Hall is also willing to flex political muscle on the matter. Hudson Yards can solidify Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's legacy by creating more affordable housing, energy-efficient sewer systems, and attractive public space. Someone who has discussed Hudson Yards with the mayor's senior advisors and requested anonymity to avoid violating confidences explained that the mayor is pressing the MTA to select a bidder by April so that the city can complete land-use review before Bloomberg leaves office. MTA spokesman Jeremy Soffin told *AN* that his board still plans to vote on selecting a Hudson Yards bidder at its March meeting.

Another advantage for Hudson Yards is that its strong residential component plays to Governor Paterson's evident interest. "Given his understanding of affordable housing issues from his time as a legislator, Governor Paterson is in a good position to prioritize housing development and preservation," John Raskin, an organizer with West Side advocacy group Housing Conservation Corps, told *AN*. "I would expect to be in at least as strong a position under his leadership as we try to win permanent affordable housing on the rail yards."

Finally, the Hudson Yards plans align with Mayor Bloomberg's support for mass transit, a potential area for cooperation among him, state Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, and the new governor. Financing for the 7 line extension also exists via bonds that the city issued, making that project relatively immune to shakeout in Albany, though the budget is still an issue. With few contractors big enough to handle the many megaprojects that agencies are putting out to bid, the MTA awarded a tunneling contract to a consortium at a cost that may preclude the construction of a subway stop at 10th Avenue. The MTA has promised to revisit

the idea of creating a 10th Avenue stop by early next year since it is nearer to residential areas, and the mayor's staff has downplayed the idea that tunneling without the intermediate stop is a sign of trouble.

Here, too, Spitzer's fall could improve the 7 line's prospects. Senator Charles Schumer has tried for decades to lead a reinvention of the Far West Side. With the mild-mannered Paterson facing overwhelming challenges, Schumer is arguably the state's most powerful Democrat. His priorities—extending the 7 line and resolving the mess around the Javits Center—match the city's agenda and the priorities of builders like Brookfield.

Of course, the coordination of private endeavors with public transportation improvements has run afoul at Moynihan Station. Patrick Foye, the straight-talking lawyer whom Spitzer assigned to coordinate these megaprojects as downstate head of the Empire State Development Corporation, quit his post hours before Paterson's swearing-in ceremony on March 17. What's more, Foye's exit could prefigure several key departures further into the Paterson administration. "Foye clearly had a personal link to Eliot, but he believes in what he does," said someone who asked for anonymity to avoid prejudicing future moves. "I think he's a guy who works all kinds of hours, and the question is whether he will get to keep doing that in a new administration. It's got to be scary to everyone working at that level to ask: What kind of person is your new boss?"

Finally, the potential profit in developing midtown and connecting it to the river may be too tantalizing. "The Steves both think they're going to end up being developers of Hudson Yards, and Moynihan is a major entryway," said Spinola. "I don't think they walk away if there's a delay. Time costs money, but both Moynihan and Hudson Yards are going to go through a couple of economic cycles, and players here have patience to go through those."

Of course, as we learned in March, cycles and terms can run shorter than anyone expects. **ALEC APPELBAUM**



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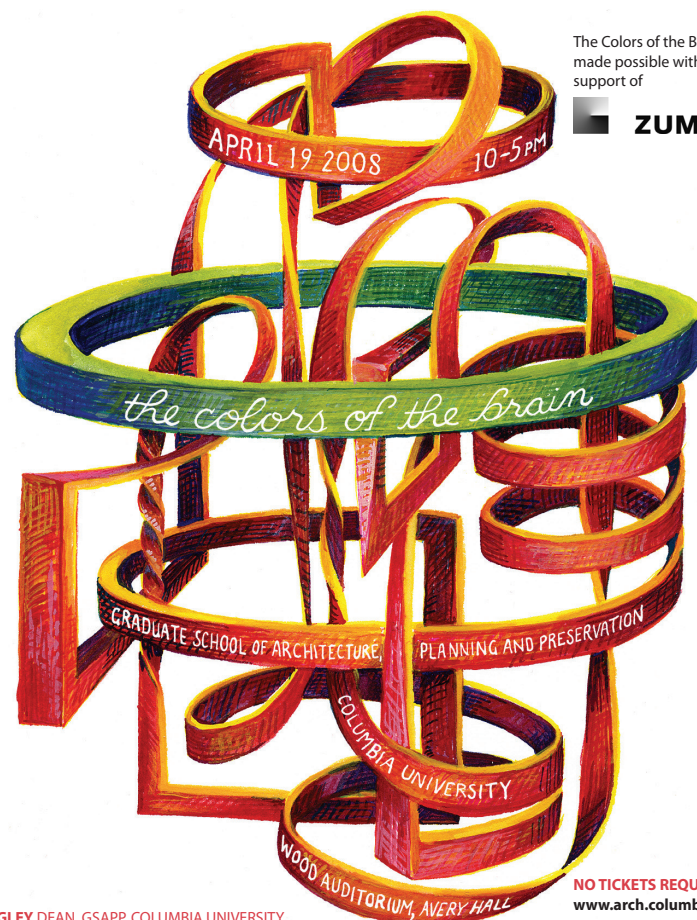
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 2, 2008

Like many of the academically inclined architects of his generation, Joel Sanders has been building more, and the move from theory and research to practice reflects an evolution in his thinking. Sanders has long explored themes of gender, sexuality, and voyeurism in his work, and some of these earlier projects betray “a certain amount of cynicism,” he admitted. While many projects centered on a user’s visual relationship to his surroundings—think lots of peek-a-boo bathrooms with translucent glass—recent work has explored the other senses, especially sound, such as in the SoHo Hotel project in New York or a new lobby, lounge, and plaza at the University of Virginia’s School of Architecture. A couple of early projects called for roofs covered in astroturf, “which was a critique of suburbia and the American lawn,” while recent projects have used green roofs and living walls. Sanders’ work has evolved from ironic commentary to genuine engagement with alternatives.

He credits several years of close collaboration with landscape designer Diana

Balmori for a richer understanding of the possibilities of integrating architecture and landscape. “We became interested in eliminating the hierarchy between the disciplines,” he said. “For a long time landscape has been treated like interior design, as somehow subservient to architecture.” While much of his firm’s work to date focused on interiors, as Sanders gets larger commissions, he has been able to work with a building’s urban context. As one of the firms selected for the General Services Administration’s “First Impressions Program,” Sanders’ team is working on the lobbies and plazas of several federal office buildings to improve security while creating a more welcoming experience for visitors.

Though he retains a flair for provocation and a quick wit, it is gratifying to see how the realities of building bring additional rigor and depth to his practice, rather than limit his ambitions.

ALAN G. BRAKE

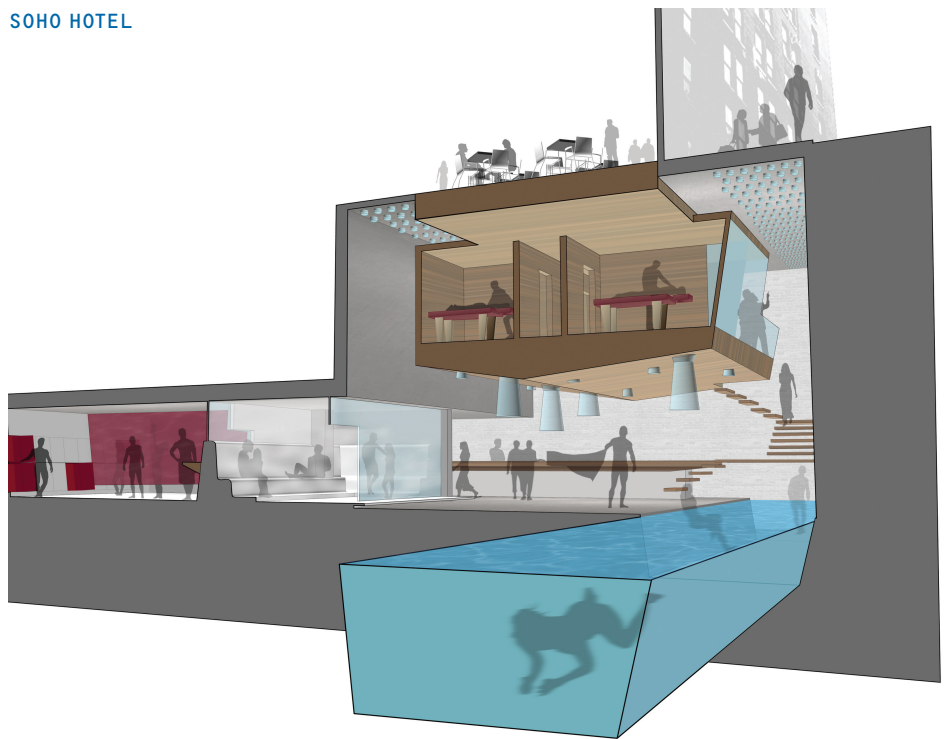
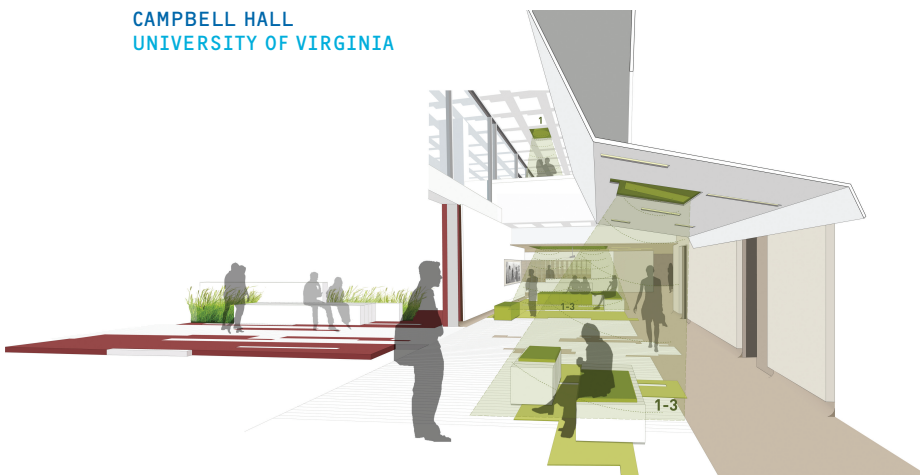
SEONGBUKDONG RESIDENCES



SEONGBUKDONG RESIDENCES



SOHO HOTEL

CAMPBELL HALL
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

GERING LOPEZ GALLERY
NEW YORK

The owners of this 3,000-square-foot, 57th Street gallery “wanted a downtown feel, uptown,” according to Sanders. The firm gutted the interior, exposing the ceiling, which, paired with polished concrete floors and a pristine white reception desk and walls, creates a contrast between rough and refined materials. The exposure of the beams and joists gives the space something of the industrial grit one associates with downtown galleries. The L-shaped gallery can be easily configured for large solo shows or several smaller exhibitions.

CAMPBELL HALL
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
CHARLOTTESVILLE
VIRGINIA

For a 10,000-square-foot lobby renovation for Sasaki Associates and Pietro Belluschi’s Campbell Hall (which houses the University of Virginia’s school of architecture) Sanders’ firm created a pixilated pattern on the plaza outside by replacing some of its standard bricks with white bricks. Working with UVA Architecture Dean Karen Ven Lengen, Sanders wanted to better connect indoors and out, and so the pattern is carried inside the lobby onto the floors and walls. The firm is also designing a series of “sound puddles” for inside and outside, small aural environments taken

from exhibition design, which can be programmed with music from student play-lists or with simulcasts of lectures or studio crits. Technology, especially cell phones and iPods, is often seen as fostering isolation in individuals and diminishing the quality of public spaces, but Sanders hopes to use sound puddles to create gathering places and foster interaction in this currently underused portion of the building.

SOHO HOTEL
NEW YORK

The firm also plans to use sound puddles in this new 34-room boutique hotel in an existing building in Soho. Using the sound puddles and partitions, spaces are designed to be flexible, for either leisure or business depending on the needs of the user, so that a glass enclosed area in the dining room can be used for meetings during the day or as a VIP lounge after hours. A below ground spa and lap pool is partially illuminated by small glass tiles embedded in the sidewalk. A second phase with additional rooms on the upper floors may be added to the program.

YALE UNIVERSITY ART
GALLERY MEDIA LOUNGE
NEW HAVEN
CONNECTICUT

As Polshek Partnership was renovating and restoring the Yale University Art Gallery, originally

designed by Louis Kahn in 1953, Sanders’ firm created a discreet reception desk, bookstore/gift shop, and media lounge, to create a comfortable space where students and the public can linger without feeling pressured to buy. The ebonized oak counter draws on the black terrazzo strips in the floor, and a pivoting bar can swing out for receptions. Contemporary sectional sofas, and green fabric-covered Bertoa wire chairs, furnish the area.

SEONGBUKDONG
RESIDENCES
SEOUL
SOUTH KOREA

This compact enclave of twelve sustainable courtyard houses, designed with Haeahn Architecture, will be built on a steeply sloping mountainside site outside Seoul. Using the idea of “borrowed views,” green roofs frame and soften the views of the neighboring houses. Each roof will be planted differently, creating a changing composition of colors throughout the seasons. In the interiors, small windows, or apertures, direct the eye toward desirable vistas. Detached houses are a rarity in hyper urbanized Seoul, so these residences are expected to command high prices.

GERING LOPEZ GALLERY**YALE UNIVERSITY ART**
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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 2, 2008



JAMIE BARRA

ARCHITECTS AROUND WORLD RALLY TO SAVE
SMITHSON'S 1972 HOUSING PROJECT

ROBIN HOOD'S WORRIED BAND

Richard Rogers, Zaha Hadid, and Venturi Scott Brown are among 1,000 signatories to a campaign to save the Robin Hood Gardens housing estate in East London—one of the few major built works of Alison and Peter Smithson.

As part of the Blackwall Reach Regeneration Project, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and landowner English Partnerships want to replace the 1966–72 scheme with new housing at a much greater density by the London practice Horden Cherry Lee. Tower Hamlets council applied to English Heritage last July for a certificate of immunity from landmarking for the estate so that there would be no statutory obstacle to its demolition. The current campaign, initiated by trade newspaper *Building Design*, urges English Heritage to recommend that Robin Hood Gardens be designated. The final decision rests with the government's culture minister, Margaret Hodge.

Built on an awkward island site with heavy traffic on either side, Robin Hood Gardens consists of two long concrete blocks, one of seven stories, the other ten. Containing 213 dwellings in a mixture of single-story units and duplexes, the buildings have long balconies on every third floor, through which residents access their apartments. These reflect the Smithsons' ideas about "streets in the sky" that date back to their unsuccessful entry for London's Golden Lane

housing competition in 1951–52. The aim was to humanize high, large-scale developments with the sociability of a residential street. A green landscaped area between the blocks, with a mound formed by rubble from their construction, supplies what the Smithsons called "a stress-free zone... an area of quietude."

But from its early days, Robin Hood Gardens was dogged by technical failings and social problems. The Smithsons' reputation, established with their Miesian Hunstanton School (1949-54) and cemented with their urbane Economist Building (1959-64), suffered badly. Describing the estate in *London 5: East*, a volume in historian Nikolaus Pevsner's authoritative *Buildings of England* series, the authors say: "Though impressively monumental, the scheme is ill-planned to the point of being inhumane." Given that this series is generally charitable to modernist ambition, that's quite a comment.

The campaign to save the estate is remarkable not just for its number of supporters but its breadth. Every generation of UK architect has signed up, from Rogers' contemporaries Lord Norman Foster and Michael Hopkins to David Chipperfield, Tony Fretton, and practices just making their name. There's a strong international presence, with Japan's Toyo Ito, New York-based Richard Meier, and the Swiss architects Roger Diener and Harry

Gugger all on the list, alongside historians Kenneth Frampton and Joseph Rykwert, developer Stuart Lipton, and author Alain de Botton.

In his online testimonial, Rogers goes so far as to say, "Robin Hood Gardens is as good, if not better, than any modern building in Britain." Other signatories acknowledge that the estate has problems, but nothing that can't be fixed.

The campaign has probably been fueled by recent remarks in the magazine *Grand Designs* by Hodge, who referred to "some concrete monstrosity—sorry, I mean modernist masterpiece." Faced with such apparent philistinism, the profession is closing ranks.

A Tower Hamlets council cabinet meeting on March 5 ratified the decision to demolish Robin Hood Gardens unless the estate is listed, in which case "the council will seek a future report on how the Blackwall Reach development framework may be adapted and implemented, having regard to the building's listed status." English Heritage expects to make its recommendation to Hodge in early April, though she doesn't have to accept its advice.

ANDREW MEAD

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU TO WEIGH IN ON STATUS OF
ADMIRAL'S ROW

ROW TO GET REPRIEVE?

COURTESY NATHAN KENSINGER

New York's sublimely rotting stretch of Civil War-era officer's quarters may live to die another day. That's the slim hope held out to preservationists and naval buffs as federal officials prepare for public meetings on Admiral's Row, the tattered buildings on the perimeter of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The row's continued limbo outrages the yard's keepers, who have long wanted it flattened to make way for a supermarket and retail complex.

The first meeting will be announced "very soon," said Kristin Leahy, a contractor for the National Guard Bureau's cultural resource program, which will determine the fate of the six structures.

Since Mayor Bloomberg announced the strip's demolition over a year ago ("Demo a Go for Admiral's Row," *AN* 19_11.17.2006), the ghosts of Admiral's Row have had precious little peace. No one disputes that the houses have suffered decades of dereliction. "Cosmetically, they look just awful," said Alex Herrera of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. Yet studies of the structures, built between the 1830s and around 1900, found them salvageable. "The actual buildings are made out of brick and stone and are quite solid," he said.

Owned by the United States Army, the six-acre site must be conveyed to New York City if it no longer meets the Army's needs. (It doesn't.) But the bureau determined in a final report soon to be posted online that Admiral's

Some of the buildings on Admiral's Row may still be salvageable.

Row is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. That triggers what could be a lengthy confab with local stakeholders. "Under the law, our job is to understand everyone's positions and try to find a middle ground," said Leahy.

The bureau puts the renovation cost at roughly \$20 million. Yard officials peg the cost at perhaps twice that amount, and point to a decade-old memorandum allowing the property's disposition.

"I urge the National Guard Bureau to expedite the transfer of the Admiral's Row site to the City of New York without imposing any conditions for rebuilding the dilapidated structures currently on the site," said Andrew Kimball, president of the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, in a statement.

Some neighbors wouldn't mind a compromise. "We're in desperate need for a supermarket," said Ed Brown, tenant association president at the nearby Ingersoll Houses. Yet Brown suggested moving the row next to the yard's 1857 commandant's residence, now undergoing a \$15 million renovation and expansion as a historical center.

As other adaptive-reuse options show, history and groceries need not be either/or propositions. "You can always incorporate new uses into the old buildings," Herrera said. "You can have your cake and eat it too." **JB**

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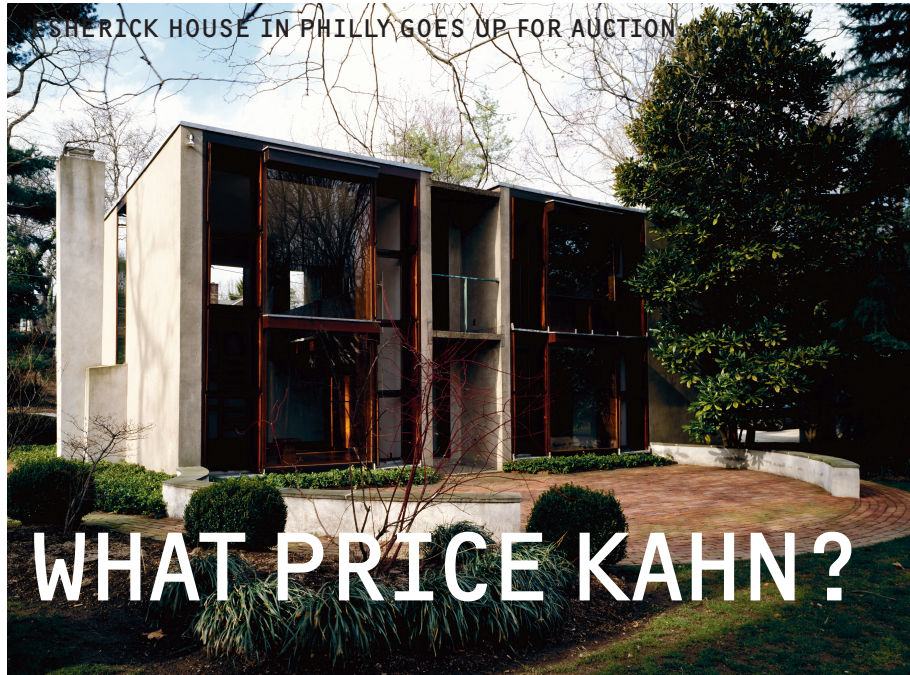


LAMINATE



STONE COUNTERTOPS

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 2, 2008



As architect of the government center in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and the monumentally vaulted Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, Louis Kahn didn't usually think small. So it comes as a surprise that he agreed to design a one-bedroom house in 1959, just as his career was taking off. He designed the 2,500-square-foot house in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia for Margaret Esherick, owner of a local bookstore, and it embodies many of the ideas he was developing as he entered the mature phase of his work—the t-shaped windows; projecting and receding facade planes; the serving and the served. Wright, the Chicago-based auction house, will be selling the house on

behalf of the third owners on May 18 with an estimate of between \$2 and \$3 million. The Esherick house was designed for the niece of Kahn's old friend Wharton Esherick, the famed Pennsylvania woodworker who also attributed unique powers to his materials and who carved a cherry and walnut kitchen for the project. Designed as an opaque symmetrical block, the house dissolves into a surprisingly three-dimensional experience because of the t-shaped windows on the front facade, the recessive planes of the rear, and the detached chimneys on its flanks. Architecture historian Vincent Scully called it a "tough and blocky mass split through the center by

its circulation" in the monograph he wrote on Kahn in 1962. Esherick barely ever lived in the house. Moving in before it was completed in October 1961, she died of pneumonia in April 1962, while Kahn (as was customary) was still finishing a few details. The current owners Dr. Robert and Lynn Gallagher bought the dilapidated but unaltered house in 1981 and turned to David Polk, a longtime designer in Kahn's office, as well as to the Kahn archives at the University of Pennsylvania for advice on restoration. This is the second architectural gem Wright will auction off: In 2006, the firm sold Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #21 for \$3.5 million. **JULIE V. IOVINE**

AT DEADLINE

COMMUNITY BOARD POOH-POOHS NOUVEL

Despite breathless reviews in the architectural press, Jean Nouvel's proposed MoMA tower is suffering vocal denunciations from its potential neighbors. On March 13, Community Board 5 passed a resolution denouncing any transfer of air rights for the project. While the undulating 75-story tower awaits the many-layered public review process, the community board is making it clear that it finds the building out of character.

GROOVY NEW LANDMARK

On March 18, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated Webster Hall, home to indie rock concerts and all-night DJ parties. The 1886 ballroom on East 11th Street was designed by architect Charles Rentz and used for dances, receptions, and union gatherings. In the 1950s and 1960s, RCA operated a recording studio at Webster Hall that recorded such greats as Duke Ellington, Frank Sinatra, and Elvis. The landmarking includes an annex, which was added in 1895. Earlier in the day, the LPC also designated the city's 91st historic district: The Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park district in Flatbush, Brooklyn, an area known for its eclectic detached homes.

SUGAR DADDIES

Within the space of a week, two massive gifts were bestowed upon two of New York's premier cultural institutions. Blackstone co-founder and Wall Street baron Stephen Schwarzman gave \$100 million to the New York Public Library on March 11. Not to be outdone, cosmetics king Leonard Lauder made a \$131 million donation to the Whitney on March 18. Schwarzman's donation will support the library system's \$1 billion expansion, whereas Lauder's will mostly boost the Whitney's endowment, from \$70 million to \$195 million, and go toward underwriting the construction of a new branch in Chelsea. In making his gift, Lauder stipulated that the bulk of the Whitney should remain in its iconic Marcel Breuer-designed home.

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Remember the 1970s? MTA director Elliot G. Sander does. In a March 3 speech on the future of the MTA, he began with a look back at the graffiti, regular derailments, and rampant crime that plagued the system when it was formed in 1968. But even with today's cleaned-up cars, New York's public transit isn't as far along as Sander has in mind. "We stand at a crossroads," he said. "We can take a business-as-usual approach... or we can set our sights higher [and] give the region the network of mobility it needs to be competitive with its global peers." With that, he unfurled a speculative plan of improvements and expansions to carry the transit system well into the middle of the century.

In the immediate term, Sander's agenda calls on the MTA to wrap up megaprojects like the Fulton Street Transit Center, the East Side Access project linking Long Island and Midtown, the extension of the 7 line, and the first phase of the Second Avenue line. He also described plans to improve connections to Metro North in New Jersey and Long Island, the introduction of bus rapid transit, and Long Island suburb-to-suburb shuttle service. The MTA will also upgrade existing service with real-time text message alerts of train delays and a "contactless" fare card. After these initiatives are fully integrated and the network becomes a more truly regional one, Sander looked further ahead: Why not extend the D line in the Bronx, bring light rail to Staten Island, and

extend the Second Avenue subway through Brooklyn and on to Queens?

Robert Paaswell, director of the University Transportation Research Center at CCNY, says the plan works because it squints so far into the distance. "You have to know as the next dollar comes in the door, where it should go," he said. "After Second Avenue, after these big projects, what comes next? We can't just stop."

So where will that "next dollar" come from? Sander made it clear that this plan hinges on the MTA's \$30 billion capital spending budget, announced in February and already called into question on March 25. Mayor Bloomberg and former governor Spitzer have supported the budget, but, Sander said, state and city money "won't be enough." The problem is Washington. "China spends nine percent of its gross domestic product on infrastructure," Sander explained. "The United States spends less than one percent of its GDP. That is unacceptable."

That makes Noah Budnik, deputy director of the local advocacy group Transportation Alternatives, nervous. Places like Shanghai are climbing to the top of the global finance pig pile, he said. "We're competing for capital with these cities. They're pouring money into their systems, and we're not. Anybody who thinks we can help our economy by moving cars is kidding themselves."

Sander feels the pressure too. "Next year, we will have four tunnel-boring machines operating to expand the subway and regional rail systems. Sound impressive?" he asked. "Right now, Shanghai has 90 such machines at work on rail and other projects."

"New York can also lead," Budnik said. "We have a big responsibility to be on the vanguard." Paaswell agrees: "The MTA isn't investing as rapidly as it should. But it's not their fault," he added quickly, and with a Washington-aimed *ahem* explained, "The funds aren't coming in." **WILLIAM BOSTWICK**

YALE PLANS TO BUILD NEW RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES

ELI EXPANSION

Yale University is moving ahead with plans to build two new residential colleges, combined dormitories, and dining halls behind the Grove Street cemetery in New Haven, Connecticut. The site is closer to Science Hill and the School of Management than to Old Campus and its environs, where the majority of undergraduates live. Undergraduate enrollment will rise to approximately 6,000 students from the current 5,300 students.

The university last added undergraduate beds in 1961 with the construction of Eero Saarinen's Morse and Stiles colleges, built in a modern-meets-medieval style all his own. The new colleges, however, are more likely to draw on earlier precedent: James Gamble Rogers' Collegiate Gothic and Georgian Revival colleges, built from 1917 to 1935. Yale School of Architecture Dean Robert A. M. Stern, who is said to be involved in the planning process, told *The Yale Daily News*, "The new colleges should be very much a part of the physical tradition of the other residential colleges. They're courtyard-bounding buildings largely in the Collegiate

Gothic tradition—although there are also Georgian ones."

Ivy League universities are in the midst of a building boom, and Yale is joining Princeton and Columbia in creating new undergraduate housing. While the residential expansion reverberates at the center of the school's sense of itself as a community, another real estate deal will likely have greater implications for the university as a research center. Last summer, the university acquired a 137-acre parcel with 1.5 million square feet of laboratory and office space from Bayer Pharmaceuticals. The campus in nearby West Haven and Orange, Connecticut, which includes 17 buildings constructed from 1968 to 2002, will likely be used by researchers at the medical school, as well as provide storage space for the University's museums. In a statement, Yale University President Richard Levin said, "The availability of Bayer's science laboratories will allow us to undertake research programs that we would not have had space to develop for a decade or more." **AGB**

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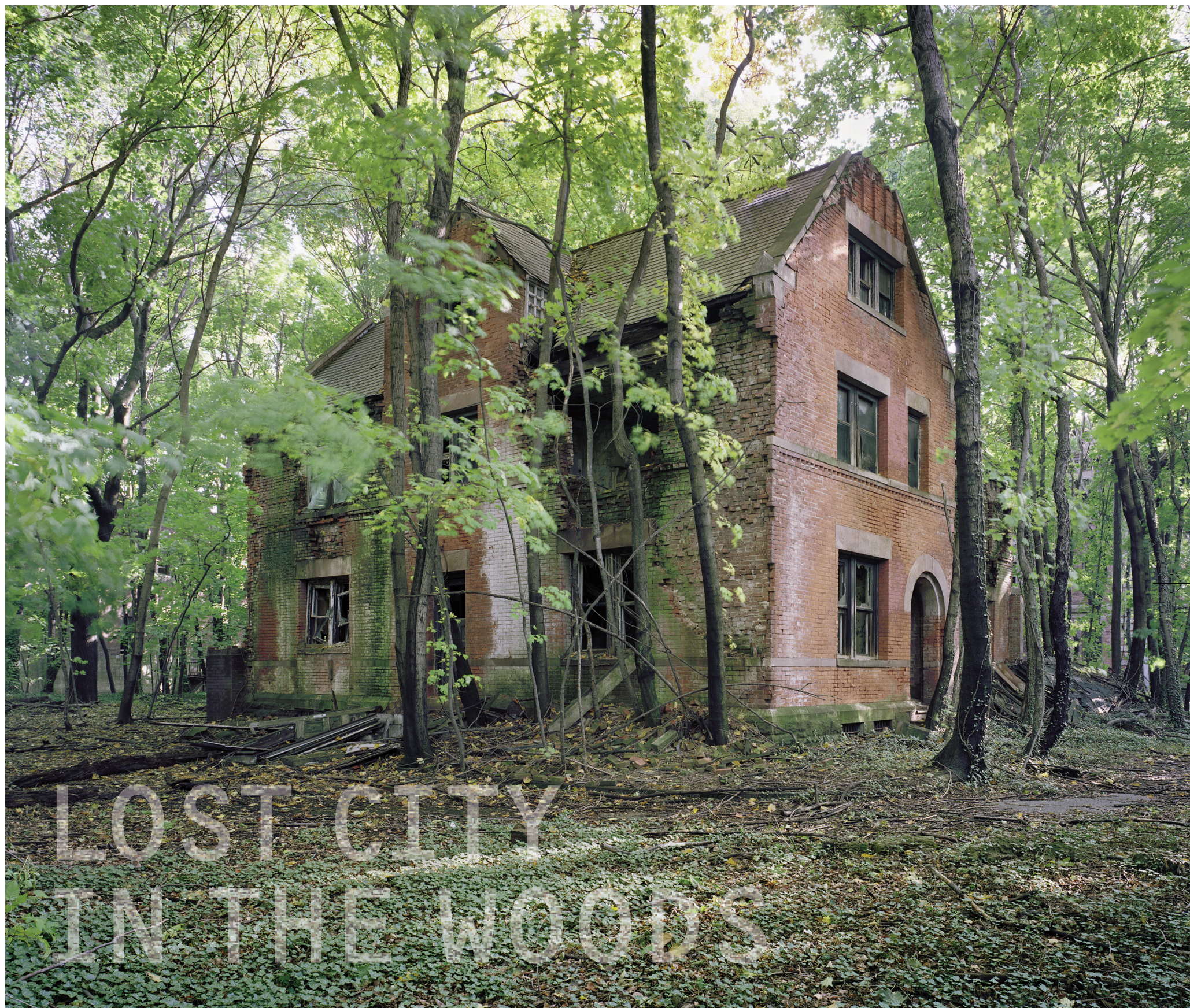
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North Brother Island in the East River is visited by rare birds, the occasional park employee, and photographer Christopher Payne, whose work documents the Art Deco hospital, Neo-Gothic morgue, and other ruins there. The complex is a crumbling testament to an era with a greater sense of civic duty. BY ALAN G. BRAKE



When the hospital complex was in full use, the island had almost no tree canopy. After 40 years of neglect, the staff house looks as if it was built in the midst of the woods (left). The tuberculosis hospital (above) is the largest and most modern structure. The dock and gantry (right) is now beyond repair.





North Brother's physical plant includes a derelict morgue (above), a coal storage building (facing page, above), and a boiler plant (facing page, below).

FEATURE
19





Architect and photographer Christopher Payne is fascinated with the afterlives of buildings. A chronicler of ruins, he has photographed disused factories on the East River, the High Line on the West Side, outmoded transit electrical substations throughout Manhattan, and, for the past few years, shuttered insane asylums and state hospitals across the country. Payne's latest subject is the buildings and landscape of North Brother, a derelict hospital island in the Bronx under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, far removed from the cycles of development and change that are transforming the city. Evidence of habitation and of the island's checkered history is literally disappearing into the woods.

In the 1880s, the island was home to a contagious disease hospital and was a model of reform-era hygiene and efficiency, earning the praise of the muckraking journalist Jacob Riis. Among its inhabitants was "Typhoid" Mary Mallon, the cook and notorious source of several outbreaks, who died there in 1938. The island was also the site of one of the nation's worst nautical disasters, the 1904 downing of the steamship General Slocum, which sank just offshore carrying German immigrants on a holiday outing. Nurses and patients on the island rescued nearly 250 passengers, but more than one thousand people died. The tuberculosis hospital was completed in 1943, but was quickly repurposed to house World War II veterans who were attending college in the city through the GI Bill. By 1952, the island became a treatment facility for juvenile drug addicts before being abandoned altogether in 1964.

Today North Brother has largely slipped

from public consciousness. It does not, for example, appear on the MTA Subway map: The place where the 29-acre island would be shows only water. "The city has an uncountable number of histories and events that are lodged, hidden away in some archive or someone's memory," said Randall Mason, a professor of historic preservation at the University of Pennsylvania who has studied the island extensively. "But things have a way of coming back; they resurface." He cites the African Burial Ground as an example. "Places become invisible if they're not used," he said. The Parks Department classifies North Brother as a nature preserve. Department representatives visit only a few times a year and the public is prohibited because of safety concerns.

While photographing sites for the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, Payne first saw the island from afar. "I felt like I had found a lost city in a jungle, and yet here I was in New York City," Payne said. His boat, he realized, was too big to get close to the island's ruined dock. "Here was this lost world, a hundred feet away, that I couldn't get to." On a second trip, he found its buildings—a hospital, power plant, boiler, morgue, housing, cistern, and other infrastructure—receding into the landscape. "It's strange to look at old photos and see how it functioned, how clear it was, a modern, open campus," he said. "It's amazing how quickly Nature reclaims what's Hers." In his photographs, trees sprout from the foundation line of the solitary staff house as layers of brick peel away from the facades. Brightly painted interiors are visible through the shards of glass in the robust-looking art deco tuberculosis hospital.

For the Parks Department, the island's

most important resident is the Black-crowned Night Heron, a rare bird that has slowly been returning to the region since the passage of the Clean Water Act in the 1970s. North Brother is part of a chain of small islands throughout the region called the "harbor herons complex," according to Bill Tai, director of natural resources for Parks. The much smaller South Brother Island came into the Parks portfolio this November, when the federal government bought it for \$2 million and turned it over to the city. Acknowledging the island's history and its crumbling architecture, Tai called North Brother "the most interesting of the heron islands." He added, however, that "maybe its highest and best use is to preserve it for wildlife." Parks is sympathetic to the island's history and the concerns of preservationists, and according to Tai, the department is hoping to do a partial restoration of the dock to make it occasionally accessible for small groups, and has secured \$500,000 in funding toward that goal. Restoration of one of the smaller buildings as an interpretive center may be possible, but he noted, "We have very reduced budget forecasts, so it's not a very high priority."

In this era of public-private partnerships, piecemeal development, and limited public resources, the state of limbo in which the island sits is not altogether uncommon. The scale and significance of its architecture, once accessible by frequent ferry service, is a disquieting reminder that such limitations were not always commonplace. For Payne, abandoned public buildings hold a particular attraction, not just for the romance of their ruin but as vestiges of civic aspirations long since jettisoned.

ALAN G. BRAKE IS AN ASSOCIATE EDITOR AT AN.



The condition of the interiors vary from the totally ruined boiler plant (facing page, left) to the relatively intact entrance hall of the nurse's house (facing page, right). The contrasting solidity and decay of the island's buildings are on display in the nurse's house courtyard (above).

STREET LIFE

*Mapping London:
Making Sense of the City*
Simon Foxell
Black Dog Publishing, \$59.95

*Building London:
The Making of a Modern Metropolis*
Bruce Marshall
Universe Publishing, \$55.00



COURTESY BLACK DOG PUBLISHING

Towards the end of the 19th century, the British social reformer Charles Booth made an illuminating map. As part of his *Inquiry into Life and Labour in London*, he color-coded the city's streets on a pre-existing plan to create "The Descriptive Map of London Poverty." The colors picked out seven different social classes as they ranged from black ("lowest class, vicious, semi-criminal") to yellow ("upper middle and upper classes, wealthy").

Some 50 years later, another similarly-coded map of London appeared. This time the colors represented bomb damage during the Second World War, with black representing "total destruction" and purple "beyond repair." Today the spectrum reappears in the

London House Price Map produced by the real estate website myhouseprice.com. Purple indicates the lowest end of the spectrum; perhaps not surprisingly, it often appears in the same neighborhoods where black or purple did on the earlier maps.

All three versions appear in Simon Foxell's *Mapping London: Making Sense of the City*, whose premise is that maps are more than an aid to navigation or a record of growth and change. Tracing a city's development through a series of them can be fascinating in itself, as Foxell recognises, and he begins with a section that does just that. In London's case, the starting point is the Copperplate Map circa 1556–1558 that gives a precise picture

of the city and its rural fringes: the gardens, orchards, fields, and open spaces where windmills turn and people practice archery or do their washing. Such vivid detail vanishes as the city expands and the familiar A-to-Z format arrives.

Having set the scene in this way, Foxell devotes the rest of his book to maps with distinct purposes, which prove disparate. Some have an environmental bias, showing land surface temperature variations, noise levels, or air pollution. Others constellate the city's fire stations or track its sewers and water supply. Harry Beck's famous map of the London Underground is here, but so are earlier, less schematic ones.

Foxell stretches his parameters to include some panoramas of the city, which is a visual bonus, for Wenceslaus Hollar's "long view" of 1647 (before the Fire of London) and the Rhinebeck Panorama of 1810 are works of art. He also features fictitious maps, such as one depicting Albert Square, the imaginary setting of the long-running television soap *Eastenders* (where Booth's "semi-criminal" class is still much in evidence).

But maps are often a means of imagining a place—they show what might have been as well as what was—and Foxell highlights a London that stayed on the drawing board. Perhaps the most famous casualty was Christopher Wren's plan for rebuilding the city after the Great Fire of 1666. Blithely ignoring such matters as the ownership of land, it replaced the one-time warren of narrow streets and alleys with avenues, piazzas, and a grid. Foxell includes this, but has also found several other post-fire alternatives, among them a design by Valentine Knight that proposed a much more simplistic grid than Wren's, enclosed by a broad canal.

Neither Wren nor Knight's vision stood much chance. As Foxell puts it: "London, although it has been generous in making space for snippets of radical city ideas, has never allowed them to challenge its inherent small-scale grain and multi-centeredness." No doubt Terry Farrell's vision for three new islands at the mouth of the Thames Estuary, also in the book, will go the same way, not to suggest that Farrell is another Wren.

Foxell's text is solid, though he doesn't discuss the subject with the imagination that Robert Harbison brings to it in his extraordinary book *Eccentric Spaces* (MIT Press, 2000). "Maps simplify the world somewhat in the way a heavy snowfall does," writes Harbison, who goes on to explore their psychological appeal: their promise of mastery and order. But given the amount of online activity now, Foxell well knows that we are entering a whole new era of map-making. A second edition of this book may look very different from the first.

If the text is supplementary to *Mapping London*, it's completely incidental to *Building London*, which is just a large-format picture book. Drawn from the **continued on page 25**

THE ACCIDENTAL CRAFTSMAN

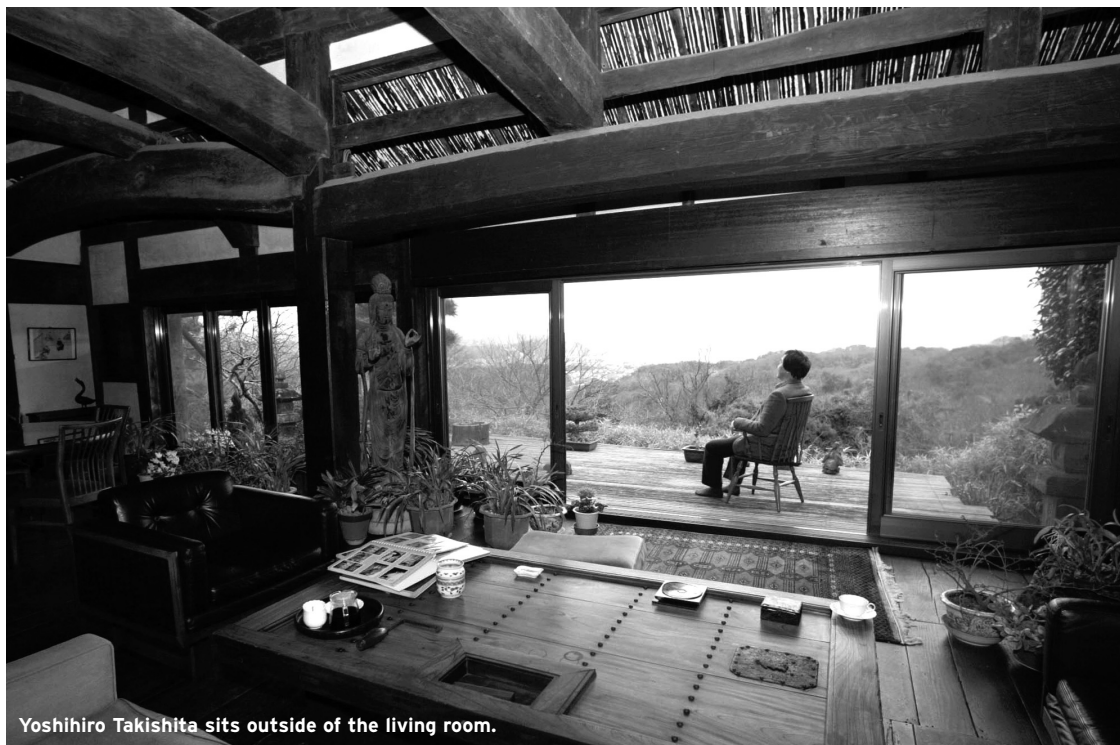
Minka: My Farmhouse in Japan
John Roderick
Princeton Architectural Press, \$24.95

Every culture has a unique heritage of building, but few are as intricate and detailed as Japan's historic wood farmhouses. Known as *minka*, which means "house of the people," these rustic homes are famed for their heavy timbers, detailed joinery, and large open interior spaces. The nation's dwindling stock, dating to the 17th century, is now caught between the vogue for historic preservation

and the vagaries of contemporary building codes.

Minka: My Farmhouse in Japan traces the life of one such building and its accidental owner, the renowned journalist John Roderick. His memoir blends architectural detail with cultural context relating to his life in Japan and the *minka* that he, feeling coerced by his adoptive family, purchased in 1965. Roderick chronicles how he acquired the 1734 structure, transported it over 100 miles from Ise to Kamakura, and painstakingly renovated it to contemporary standards. The book is further affecting in light of the author's death, at age 93, on March 11.

A longtime correspondent for the Associated Press, Roderick studied Japanese in 1942 under the War Department program. He began writing on China, however, where he lived among the Yan'an locals in caves in 1947 and reported on the Maoist **continued on page 25**



Yoshihiro Takishita sits outside of the living room.

COURTESY PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 2, 2008

SILENT ACRES

Worlds Away: New Suburban Landscapes
Walker Art Center,
1750 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis
through August 17



COURTESY MATTHEW MOORE

Divided into three main sections addressing housing, driving, and shopping, *Worlds Away* at the Walker Art Center gives a curiously arm's-length view of what's happening in suburbia. In light of the current sub-prime mortgage crisis, an exhibition that laid bare contemporary suburban architecture as an expression of the nexus of residential finance structures, real estate strategies, and land use policy could have been topical and insightful. Christopher Leinberger's recent article in *The Atlantic*, "The Next Slum?" paints a grim picture of the imminent demise of many recent suburban residential developments and the likely social consequences. But rather than taking an investigative stance, or declaring a distinct polemical position, this show, co-curated by Andrew Blauvelt and Tracy Myers, is more archival, offering a visual catalog of views of new suburban landscapes, both new(ish) and well-known.

As mounted in the bright white galleries of the Walker's Herzog and de Meuron addition, the exhibit—comprising photographs, architectural models and drawings, paintings, and occasional videos—seems strangely lifeless and static, perhaps as an indirect critique of its subject. One comes away with the impression that suburbia is either dull monochrome or garishly multicolored, with a limited tonal range in between. Adam Cvijanovic's wall-sized

latex-on-Tyvek painting *Same Day Delivery*, an orgiastic explosion of consumer detritus, greets the visitor on arrival. But the energy of this image is encountered in few other projects on display besides Benjamin Edwards' video-game-like panorama *Immersion* and Estudio Teddy Cruz's *Cross Border Suburbias*, which depicts the transmigration of residential components from Levittown San Diego across the U.S.-Mexico border to Tijuana.

Without scrutinizing the wall-labels (printed in an uncomfortably small typeface), many of the artifacts—especially the architectural models—are alluring but mute. One has to make an effort to read crucial comments such as those associated with Cruz's projects that declare: "No advances in housing design can be made without advances in housing policy and economic frameworks." In the shrine-like rooms, the silence is broken by voices from Howard Silver's 1980s documentaries on the (now-defunct) BEST catalog retailer showrooms, big-boxes designed as architectural one-liners by James Wines and Alison Sky of SITE. "Beautiful store," comments one elderly male shopper in the film *Grand Openings* of the BEST store, whose particular visual pun was a tip-tilted facade. "I just don't like the architecture on the outside."

A somewhat wistful but stoically resourceful tone pervades *Worlds Away*: Several

other projects address the demise of formerly successful shopping malls, or strategies for enlivening and reactivating these abandoned behemoths and their associated sea of parking. Interboro's installation documenting the fall from commercial grace and subsequent ad hoc resuscitation of the Dutchess County Mall in Fishkill, NY, makes a misguided attempt to turn what is essentially a slide show into a three-dimensional experience. Plans, usage patterns, and photos are projected vertically onto a horizontal surface featuring a white scale-model of the building, which distorts the text captions and images and makes them hard to read, while the voiceover narration switches from a supposed first-person elderly male, representing the distressed mall itself, to a female recounting Interboro's proposed incremental re-uses. Like so much about suburban architecture, this piece offers relatively limited content stretched over a disproportionate amount of physical space.

More effective use of media is demonstrated in Lateral Architecture's Flatspace project, which combines wall-mounted video animations, drawings, and several Plexiglas models that are colorful and fetching, albeit somewhat inscrutable. "In its current form, public life in exurbia is comprised of fleeting encounters of drivers jockeying for parking spaces, utilitarian dialogues at drive-

thrus, and other perfunctory exchanges. How can one transform this environment?" the designers ask. The component projects *Pixelscape*, *On Off Ramps*, and *Confetti* are propositions for alternative hybrid uses of canonic suburban spaces, such as parking along the circumference of cloverleaf ramps. This figure appears again in a fabric pattern designed by Jessica Smith, where massive infrastructure elements are flattened into a repeat surface pattern of a linen wall-hanging, which from a distance looks perfectly art nouveau.

Among the photographers, Andrew Bush's widely-seen portraits of car drivers still

Mathew Moore's *Rotations: Single Family Residence #5* (2003-2004).

arrest the eye, while Angela Strassheim's shot of a family holding hands and saying grace in a McDonald's restaurant has a quality of surreal poignancy that persists, even when one discovers that the photo is not an extraordinary chance moment of verité but her own Apostolic Christian family. Photographer Brian Ulrich stalks frozen food aisles in a suburban Chicago grocery store looking for signs of cultural malaise, and not surprisingly, finds it. Greg Stimac's shots of people mowing their lawns are more interesting as a series than on their own (two are shown in the exhibit, but several others are presented in the catalog). In a more ambitious and critical gesture, Matthew Moore's *Rotations: Single Family Residence* shows, from above, the outline of a typical suburban tract home cut into his family's farm land outside Phoenix.

Julia Christensen has allegedly logged 75,000 miles to document re-used Big-Box stores around the U.S., a valiant but not terribly interesting exercise that seems more like a kind of penance. By contrast, Paho Mann's grid of inkjet prints, *Re-inhabited Circle Ks (Phoenix)* (2004-06), presents 16 variations on the theme of what to do with abandoned single-story supermarkets. Shot in color at the exact same eyeline and distance, Mann's work brings to mind Bernd and Hilla Becher's stark black-and-white typologies of disused industrial structures and, like theirs, adds up to more than

the sum of its parts.

Ed Ruscha's early 1990s photographs of parking lots are mounted, wittily, perpendicular to more recent bird's-eye views by the Center for Land Use Interpretation of vehicular test tracks. *Autotechnogeoglyphics*, made in 2006-08, show the secret patches of land north of LA and near Phoenix where major car manufacturers test their future models. The vast loops in the sandy-colored ground, inscribed courtesy of Volvo, Ford, Nissan, Honda et al., seem mysterious, slightly sinister (like spy satellite discoveries), and almost mythic. These vast runic inscriptions, like an inadvertent species of Land Art, are the Mayan ball courts of the SUV age.

Repetition as a means to a higher-order pattern and, at the opposite end of the development food chain, the generic made unique again: these are the underlying aesthetic principles that thread through *Worlds Away*. The cycle of construction, occupation, bankruptcy, dereliction, recycling, and ad-hoc individuation is hinted at without being made explicit as the show's polemic argument. The accompanying 336-page catalog, edited by Blauvelt, features interviews, plentiful images, and critical essays by a range of authors; in many ways, it provides a richer experience than the exhibition and will probably become a standard reader for courses on contemporary suburbia.

JANET ABRAMS IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DESIGN INSTITUTE IN MINNEAPOLIS.

Paho Mann's *Re-inhabited Circle K's (Phoenix)* (2004-2006).



COURTESY PAHO MANN

West End map of London, 2006.



COURTESY SILVERMAN LTD.

STREET LIFE continued from page 23 holdings of Getty Images (which bought one of the UK's finest historic photo collections, the Hulton Picture Library), it marshals its material under some 50 headings: among them, Royal Palaces, Places of Worship, and unexpectedly, Public Housing.

It's one of those books in which alliteration recurs like a nervous tic, with "Ostentatious Oases" on one page and "Lordly Locations" on the next. From "bustling" Billingsgate

Market in the early 20th century to Lord Norman Foster's overrated Gherkin in the early 21st, the book is crammed with visual clichés, too: It is a tourist trip through the archives, plus predictable images from today. *Building London* is pleasant enough to leaf through, but it seldom details in the way that Foxell's book does. His maps are far more eloquent than these photos.

ANDREW MEAD IS AN ARCHITECTURE CRITIC IN LONDON.

THE ACCIDENTAL CRAFTSMAN continued from page 23 escalation. Only in 1959 was he assigned to Tokyo, where he grew enamored of the "noisy, free-wheeling democracy of postwar Japan." A chance encounter brought him together with a law student named Yoshihiro Takishita. As their friendship blossomed, Roderick wistfully mentioned his taste for the "spare, clean, uncluttered lifestyle" of rural Japan. He soon found himself in possession of one "monster of a house" in a condemned village, for the sum of \$14.

Roderick's friendship with the Takishitas offers the book's most intriguing material. Yoshihiro's parents, an ex-Imperial Army cavalryman and a kimono maker/historian, were instrumental in arranging the *minka* purchase. Abandoning his law studies, Yoshihiro became de facto project manager, scheduling the beam-by-beam dismantling and delivery of the house over narrow dirt roads and hairpin turns. He also navigated among dubious real estate agents and conniving local councils while coordinating workers

from distant prefectures. Indeed, Yoshihiro, who eventually became Roderick's adopted son, was so successful in modernizing the house without sacrificing its historic integrity that he went on to a career as an antiques dealer, renovating *minka* throughout the world.

Roderick's *Minka* is a quick read that will charm enthusiasts of Japanese architecture (or fans of whimsical memoirs), even if the author repeats himself on occasion and strays too often into anecdotal accounts of housekeepers or international visitors. The volume's black-and-white photos show the

minka under reconstruction, but reveal little about the renovation's unique achievement as a hybrid of historical form and modern amenities.

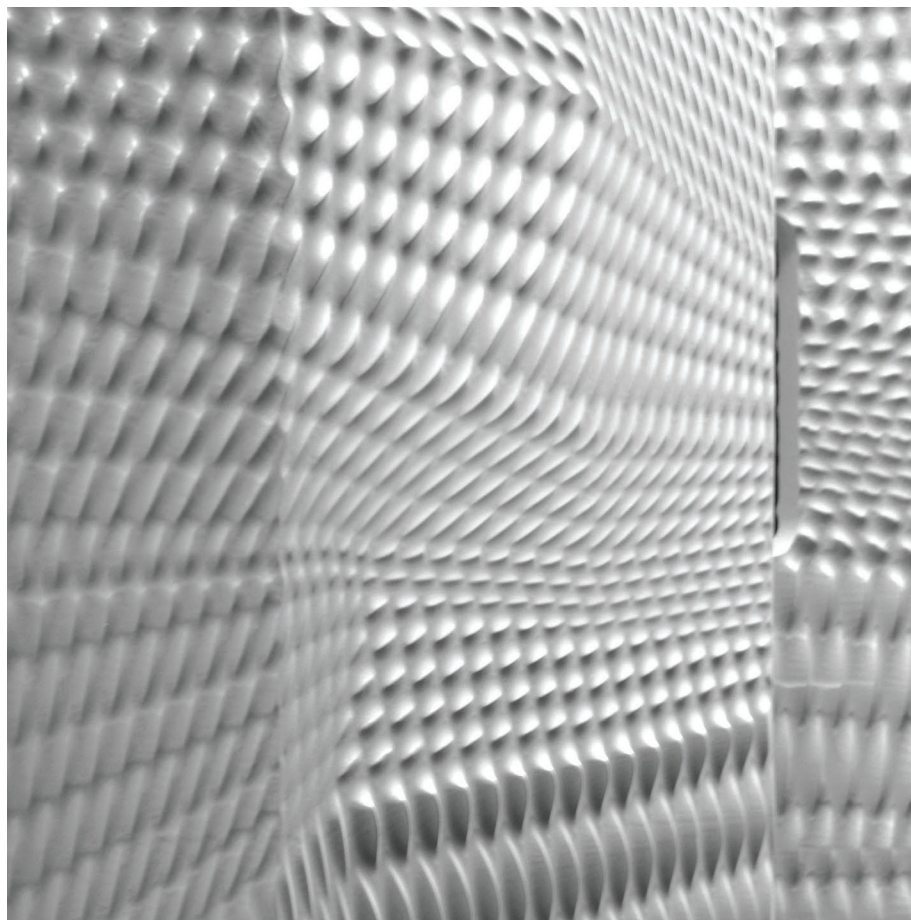
Still, Roderick's sense of adventure and curiosity are vibrantly displayed throughout this tale, which illustrates the relevance of craft, tradition, and history to contemporary society. That much was clear to Emperor Hirohito of Japan, who awarded Roderick the Order of the Sacred Treasure in 1985 for his meritorious service to the nation.

JAMES WAY IS A TOKYO-BASED WRITER AND DESIGNER.

The Nomura minka, 1965.



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RESOURCES

Open:Recreation Center (p. 5): The flooring contractor for the Park Slope Armory was Mathusek Sport Floors, 25 Iron Horse Rd., Oakland, NJ 07436, 201-405-0004, www.mathusek.com. Painting was done by L&L Painting, 900 South Oyster Bay Rd., Hickville, NY 11801, 516-349-1900. The HVAC system was installed by Kalisch-Jarcho, 91-31 Queens Blvd., Suite 601, Elmhurst, NY 11373, 718-507-6600.

The electrician was Interphase Electrical, 79 Rocklyn Ave., Lynbrook NY 11563, 516-256-5515.

Studio Visit: Joel Sanders Architect (p. 10): The fixtures for the Yale University Art Gallery media lounge were fabricated by Art Guild, 300 Wolf Dr., Thorofare, NJ 08086, 856-853-7500, www.artguildinc.com.

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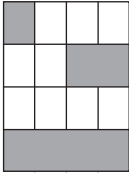
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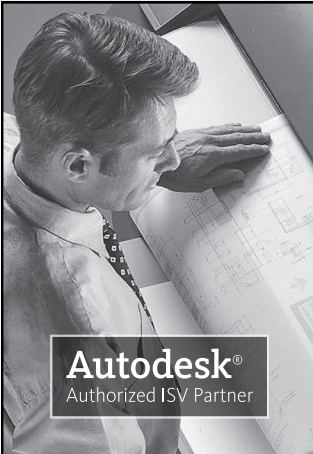
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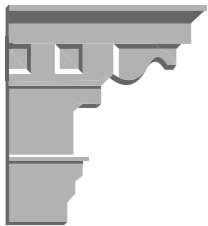
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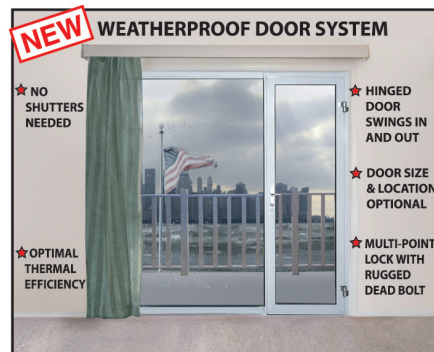
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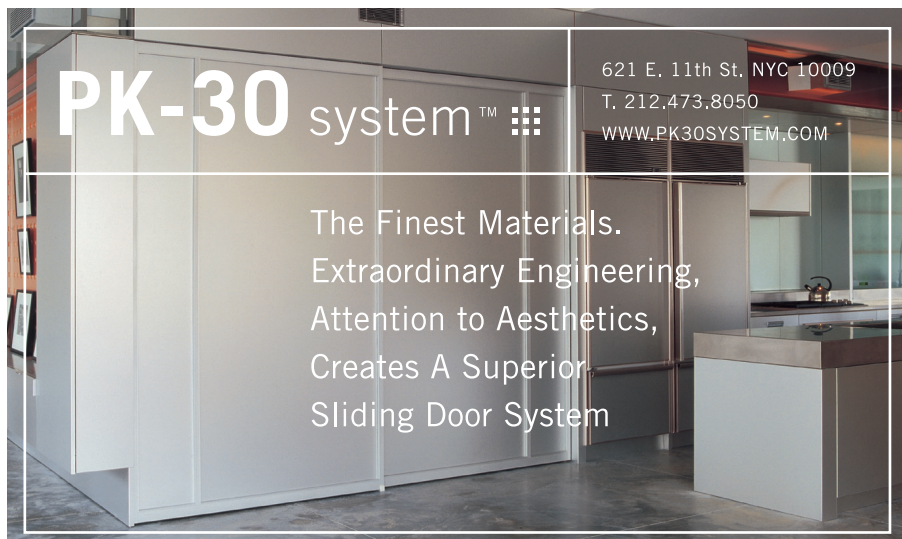
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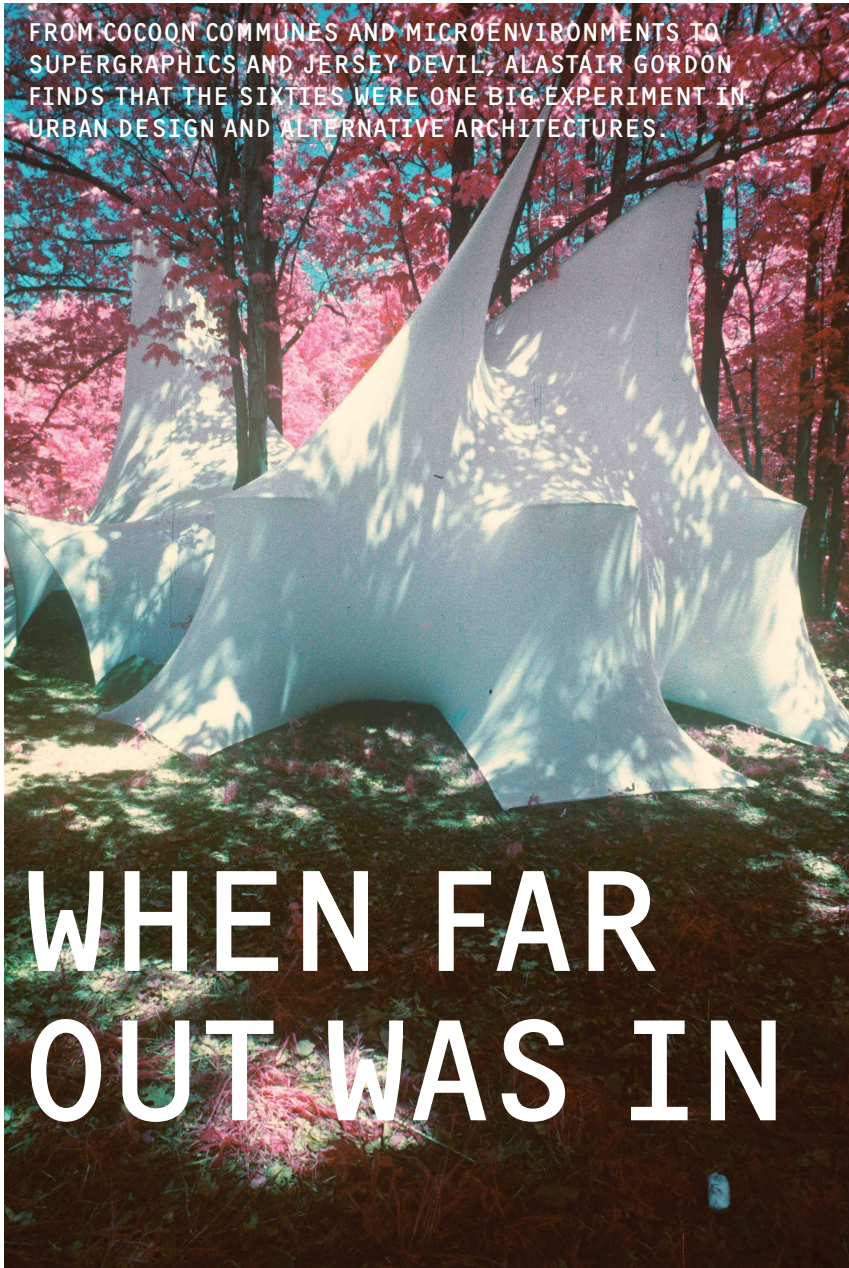
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FROM COCOON COMMUNES AND MICROENVIRONMENTS TO SUPERGRAPHICS AND JERSEY DEVIL, ALASTAIR GORDON FINDS THAT THE SIXTIES WERE ONE BIG EXPERIMENT IN URBAN DESIGN AND ALTERNATIVE ARCHITECTURES



WHEN FAR OUT WAS IN

ALEKSANDRA KASUBA

It started somewhere in a whorl of swirling lines and color emanating from the source, pulsating, protoplasmic, spiraling outward like one of Jung's mystic mandalas. Psychedelic explorers of the early 1960s wrote about spatial mutations in vivid prose, hoping to capture the ineffable sense of displacement they were experiencing on new utopias like LSD and Mescaline. "One has the impression of *mouches volants*, a gentle flowing of boundaries and substances," wrote psychologist Rolf Von Eckartsberg after his first LSD trip. Traditional hierarchies were upturned, polarities flipped. Foreground and background elements merged into a singular softness. Space, or the idea of space, became elastic, almost acrobatic. British psychiatrist Humphrey Osmond watched as the walls of his living room bulged with a sense of imminent collapse: "I knew that behind those perilously un-solid walls, something was waiting to burst through," he wrote.

All of this was heady inspiration for young architects and designers who were tired of the rigid tyrannies of postwar modernism.

It was estimated that by 1966, as many as one million Americans had tried LSD. By 1967, more than four million had seen the white light. Multi-media artists of the period attempted to translate their acid revelations into real spatial adventures, with flashing lights and softly padded enclosures. The USCO collaborative (Gerd Stern, Steve Durkee, Michael Callahan, Stewart Brand,

et al.), pioneers of early psychedelia, built a temple to the new acid religion in an old church in upstate New York. The six-sided "Tabernacle" featured a domed ceiling, walls painted with mystical imagery, strobes, black lights, and oscilloscopes. There was much talk of centering, getting centered, finding the center. "Hold on to the center," said the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu, while the ancient *I-Ching* spoke of innumerable centers in its enigmatic hexagrams, vague enough to serve every occasion from quiet introspection to armed revolt. Everyone wanted to sit, squat, kneel, join hands in a circle, assume the lotus position, sleep, or make love on the ground. This was the primary instinct in the transformation toward Aquarian living—a downward movement—signaling a return to primitive origins, to Mother Earth, and the beginnings of environmental consciousness. Mattresses and pillows were scattered across floors. Legs of tables and chairs were sawn off in what Tom Wolfe described as the "amputated" look. Unnecessary furnishings were limited or banished altogether.

Meanwhile, young design rebels set out to create versions of psychedelic flux in what one critic called "LSDesign," hoping to liberate architectural space the way Jimi Hendrix was liberating rock music. Even a mainstream journal like *Progressive Architecture* acknowledged LSD's potential when it published interviews with architects who had designed under the influence.

Aleksandra Kasuba's Fabric Structure in Whiz Bang City No.2 was built in Woodstock, New York in 1972.

("LSD: A Design Tool?" in August, 1966.)

There was a widespread fascination with "microenvironments," rooms within rooms, and toy-like contraptions that promised to turn the routines of daily life into total theater. Lines of sight were skewed. Disorienting illusions were created with mirrors, converging panels, ramps, and staircases that led nowhere. Billboard-sized "supergraphics" were painted onto walls and ceilings with exaggerated numerals, arrows, and chevron patterns intended to abolish boxlike space. Rooms, even whole cities, would appear as cellular entities, detached from conventional engineering, floating, almost nonexistent. "All that is solid melts into air," wrote Karl Marx, and in post-Beatles consciousness, everything seemed transitory and floating, literally filled with air. Vinyl inflatables became ubiquitous at Be-Ins, rock concerts, and antiwar demonstrations. Architect-activist members of Ant Farm drove across America setting up their 100-foot inflatable pillow. The Utopie, a group including architects and designers in Paris, proposed a whole world of inflatable structures, from housing units to vast traveling theaters. A similar clique in Austria, Haus-Rucker-Co., planned to re-stimulate the urban wasteland with pod-like dwellings called "pneuma-cosms" that would sprout like alien spores from the shells of old infrastructure. In the summer of 1970, they erected a giant air mattress in Manhattan that blocked traffic and created an instant spectacle.

Space was perceived as entirely malleable and could be made to twist and torque with scrims of stretched fabric, as in the work of Aleksandra Kasuba, a Lithuanian-born designer who created a cocoon-like dwelling in the woods of Woodstock, New York, by stretching fabric between the branches of several trees. Loose edges of fabric were sewn together by hand while stones were used to anchor the structure to the ground. (14 people lived inside Kasuba's ghostly membrane during *Whiz Bang City East*, an alternative building conference held in the summer of 1972.)

Journals of the late Sixties and early Seventies were filled with urban proposals that expanded and contracted with fluctuating populations; cities that hung suspended in midair; cities that breathed; cities that nurtured creativity. French artist Yves Klein proposed a city made from fire and smoke, and why not? "Perhaps we shall reach a point where there is a means of making a new, more free-forming *soft* city which is really circumstantial and not tied to hierarchical notions," wrote Archigram's Peter Cook, while others speculated about "alternative scenarios" for a younger, nomadic generation. Paolo Soleri filled his notebooks with fantastical urban forms called "Arcologies" that were drawn like musculature, stretched and twisted into biomorphic sinews. "Novanoah," a buoyant city for 2.4 million inhabitants, would float on the sea, while "Arcanyon" spanned the walls of a desert canyon.

"Everything is constantly changing," wrote Dutch visionary architect Constant Nieuwenhuys, who worked out elaborate plans for "New-Babylon," a web-like city designed for both material and psychic flexibility. Early cyber nerds at MIT were already

speculating about artificial ecosystems that responded to emotional and biological needs: "Buildings that open up like flowers... If the heartbeat accelerates, the room becomes redder," wrote W. M. Brodeyas, author of *Soft Architecture—The Design of Intelligent Environments* (1967). William Katavolos, founder of the Guild for Organic Design, predicted the development of intelligent, self-generating organisms that would be able to shape themselves into new cities and "exploding patterns." Rudolph Doernach, father of "hydrogenetic biotecture," proposed artificial icebergs as habitable cities and "edible towns" shaped by microorganisms. Walls and windows containing genetic information would adapt, like human skin, to both meteorological and social changes.

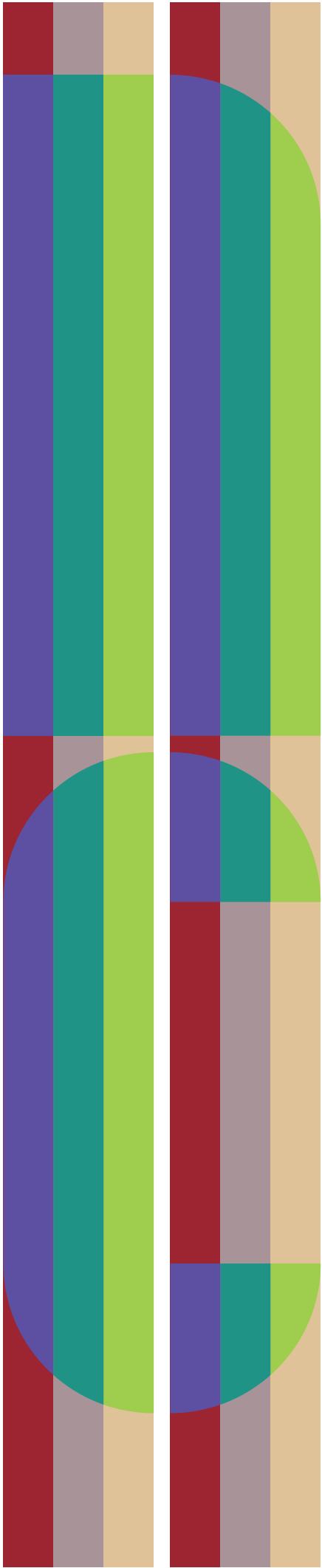
The mood wasn't all mind-expanding optimism. "There must be some way out of here," sang Bob Dylan in the opening lyrics to *All Along the Watchtower*, a song that was released late in 1967 after 43 people were killed in race riots in Detroit. Many, like Marshall McLuhan, believed that the city would disintegrate altogether and be replaced by small tribal clusters out in the hinterlands. "We actually live mythically and integrally, as it were, but we continue to think in the old, fragmented space and time patterns of the pre-electric age," wrote McLuhan in *Understanding Media* (1964).

Disillusioned young architects—sick of Gropius and Corb; unmoved by paper utopias—would head out for the wilderness and start to build mythic, integral communities with their own hands. A group of former Yale architecture students led by Dave Sellers and Bill Rienecke moved to Prickly Mountain, Vermont, and built a series of pyramidal houses using recycled materials. Princeton students led by Steve Badanes called themselves Jersey Devil and followed suit. In the funky, self-build revolution, making shelter was seen as an act of personal transformation and revelation. Charles Harker and other students from the architecture program at the University of Texas, Austin, banded together as Tao Design and built undulating, biomorphic structures working without plans, improvising as they went, weaving strands of PVC piping into nest-like configurations and spraying the structural skeleton with polyurethane foam. "All design is spontaneous," said Harker, who compared the process to the metamorphosis of a butterfly. One of the most charismatic communities took shape across the border on Hornby Island in British Columbia, where U.S. draft dodgers and self-build Canadians banded together and built wildly eclectic houses made from the abundant wood that washed up on the island's rugged shoreline. What came to be known as the "Hornby Style" was characterized by artfully arranged driftwood logs, post-and-beam frameworks, sod roofs, hand-split shakes, and a preference for improvising on the spot. "I never did have a design, just a napkin with a dream on it," said Arthur Corner, who framed his own house using 45-foot-long poles hauled up from the beach. "Building is like yoga," said another long-hair architect/builder. "It's a constant surrender."

ALASTAIR GORDON'S SPACED OUT: RADICAL ENVIRONMENTS OF THE PSYCHEDELIC SIXTIES WILL BE PUBLISHED BY RIZZOLI IN JUNE.

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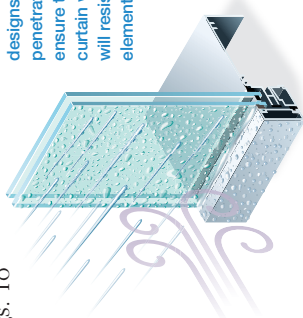
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Oldcastle Glass.® Keeping rain out of buildings while allowing natural ventilation and sunlight in has always presented a challenge to building designers. As the only curtain wall manufacturer that can also custom-manufacture architectural glass, we have the ability to **engineer and test** our glass and curtain wall together as one seamless solution. We call it Oldcastle Glass® Envelope.™ It's a commitment to providing **forward-thinking building envelope solutions.** And if the glass and metal are engineered together, the water stays on the outside of the building where it belongs. To find out more about what Oldcastle Glass® is doing to create better buildings, call **1-866-OLDCASTLE** (653-2278) or visit our new website at **www.oldcastleglass.com**.

Our rain-screen designs and water penetration testing ensure that your curtain wall design will resist the elements.



Oldcastle Glass® Where glass becomes architecture™

